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SALATHIEL.

A STORY OF

THE PAST, THE PRESENT, AND

THE FUTURE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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SALATHIEL.

CHAPTER I.

The first rage of the persecution was at an end. The popular thirst of blood was satiated. The natural admiration that follows fortitude and innocence, and the natural hatred that consigns a tyrant to the execration of his time and of posterity, found their way; and Nero dared murder no more. I had voluntarily shared the prison of Constantius and my child. Its doors were set open. The liberality of my people supplied the means of returning to Judea, and we

hastened down the Tiber in the first vessel that spread her sails from this throne of desolation. The chances that had brought us together were easily explained. Salome urged to desperation by the near approach of her marriage, and solicited to save herself from the perjury of vowing her love to a man unpossessed of her heart, flew with Constantius to Cæsarea. The only person in their confidence was the domestic who betrayed me into the hands of the procurator, and who assisted them only that he might lure me from home.

At Cæsarea they were married, and remained in concealment under the protection of the young Septimius. My transmission to Rome instruck them with terror, and Constantius instantly embarked to save me by his Italian influence. The attempt was surrounded with peril; but Salome would not be left behind. Disguised, to avoid my possible refusal of life at his hands, he followed me step by step. There were many of our people among the attendants, and even in the higher offices of the court. The empress had, in her reproaches to Nero, disclosed the new

barbarity of my sentence. No time was to be lost. Constantius, at the imminent hazard of life, entered the palace. He saw the block already erected in the garden before the window where Nero sat inventing a melody which was to grace my departure. The confusion of the fire allowed the only escape. I was the witness of his consternation when he made so many fruitless efforts to penetrate to the place where Salome remained in the care of his relatives. When I scaled the burning mansion, he desperately followed, lost his way among the ruins, and was giving up all hope, when, wrapt in fire and smoke, Salome fell at his feet. He bore her to another mansion of his family. It had given shelter to the chief Christians. They were seized. His young wife scorned to survive Constantius; and chance and my own fortunate desperation alone saved me from seeing their martyrdom.

We returned to Judea. In the first embrace of my family, all was forgotten and forgiven. My brother rejoiced in Salome's happiness; and even her rejected kinsman,

through all his reluctance, acknowledged the claims of the man to the daughter's hand, who had saved the life of the father.

What perception of health is ever so exquisite, as when we first rise from the bed of sickness? What enjoyment of the heart is so full of delight, as that which follows extreme suffering? I had but just escaped the most formidable personal hazards; I had escaped the still deeper suffering of seeing ruin fall on beings whom I would have died to rescue. Salome's heart, overflowing with happiness, gave new brightness to her eyes, and new animation to her lovely form. She danced with involuntary joy; she sang, she laughed; her fancy kindled into a thousand sparklings. Beautiful being! in my visions thou art still before me: I clasp thee to my widowed heart, and hear thy sweet voice, sweeter than the fountain in the desert to the pilgrim, cheering me in the midst of my more than pilgrimage!

An accession of opulence gave the only increase, if increase could be given, to the happiness that seemed within my reach. The year

of JUBILEE arrived. Abolished as the chief customs of Judea had been by the weakness and guilt of idolatrous kings and generations, they were still observed by all who honoured the faith of their fathers. The law of Jubilee was sacred in our mountains. It was the law of a wisdom and benevolence above man.

Its peculiar adaptation to Israel, its provision for the virtue and happiness of the individual, and its safeguard of the public strength and constitutional integrity, were unrivalled among the finest ordinances of the ancient world.

On the entrance of the Israelites into Canaan, the land was divided, by the inspired ordinance, among the tribes, according to their numbers. To each family a portion was given, as a gift from Heaven. The gift was to be inalienable. The estate might be sold for a period: but at the fiftieth year, in the evening of the day of atonement, in the month Tisri, the sound of the trumpets from the sanctuary, echoed by thousands from every mountain top, proclaimed the

Jubilee. Then returned every family to its original possessions. All the more abject degradations of poverty, the wearing out of families, the hopeless ruin, were obviated by this great law. The most undone being in the limits of Judea had still a hold in the land. His ruin could not be final, perhaps could not extend beyond a few years; in the last extremity he could not be scorned as one whose birth-right was extinguished; the Jubilee was to raise him up, and place the outcast on the early rank of the sons of Israel. All the higher feelings were cherished by this incomparable hope. The man, conscious of his future possession, retained the honourable pride of property under the sternest privations. The time was hurrying on, when he should stand on an equality with mankind, when his worn spirit should begin the world again with fresh vigour, if he were young; or when he should sit under the vine and the fig-tree of his fathers, if his age refused again to struggle for the distinctions of the world.

The agrarian laws of Rome and Sparta, feeble efforts to establish this true foundation

of personal and political vigour, showed at once the natural desire, and the weakness, of human wisdom. The Roman plunged the people in furious dissensions, and perished almost in its birth. The Spartan was secured for a time only by barbarian prohibitions of money and commerce—a code which raised an iron wall against civilisation, turned the people into a perpetual soldiery, and finally, by the mere result of perpetual war, overthrew liberty, dominion, and name.

The Jubilee was for a peculiar people, restricted by a divine interposition from increase beyond the original number. But who shall say how far the same benevolent interposition might not have been extended to all nations, if they had revered the original compact of Heaven with man? how far through the earth the provisions for each man's wants might have been secured; the overwhelming superabundance of beggared and portionless life that fills the world with crime, have been restrained; and tyranny, that growth of desperate abjectness of the understanding, and gross corruption of the

senses, have been repelled by manly knowledge and native virtue? But the time may come!

In the first allotments of the territory, ample domains had been appointed for the princes and leaders of the tribes. One of those princedoms now returned to me, and I entered upon the inheritance of the leaders of Naphtali, a large extent of hill and valley, rich with corn, olive, and vine. The antiquity of possession gave a kind of hallowed and monumental interest to the soil. I was master of its wealth; but I indulged a loftier feeling in the recollection of those who had trod the palace and the bower before me. Every apartment bore the trace of those whom from my boyhood I had reverenced; every fountain, every tree was familiar to me from the strong impressions of infancy; and often when in some of the fragrant evenings of Spring I have flung myself among the thick beds of bloom, that spread spontaneously over my hills, the spirits of the loved and honoured seemed to gather round me. I saw once more the matron gravity, the virgin grace; even the more remote generations, those great progenitors who with

David fought the Philistine; the solemn chieftains, who with Joshua followed the ark of the covenant through toil and battle into the promised land; the sainted sages who witnessed the giving of the law, and in the midst of the idolatry of the people worshipped Him who spake in thunder from Sinai; all moved before me, for all had trod the very ground on which I gazed. Could I transfer myself back to their time, on that spot I should stand among a living circle of heroic and glorious beings, before whose true glory the pomps of earth were vain; the hearers of the prophets, prophets themselves; the servants of the hand of miracle, the companions of the friend of God; nay, distinction that surpasses human thought, themselves the chosen of heaven.

The cheering occupations of rural life were to be henceforth pursued on a scale more fitting my rank. I was the first chieftain of my tribe, the man by whose wisdom multitudes were to be guided; and by whose benevolence multitudes were to be sustained. I felt that mingled sense of rank and responsibility which, with the vain,

the ignorant, or the vicious, is the strongest temptation to excess; but with the honourable and the educated, constitutes the most pleasurable and elevated state of the human mind.

Yet what are the fortunes of man, but a ship launched on an element whose essence is restlessness? The very wind, without which we cannot move, gathers to a storm, and we are undone! The tyranny of our conquerors had for a few months been paralysed by the destruction of Rome. But the governor of Judea was not to be long withheld, where plunder allured the most furious rapacity that perhaps ever hungered in the heart of man. I was in the midst of our harvest, surrounded with the fruitage of the year, and enjoying the sights and sounds of patriarchal life, when I received the formidable summons to present myself again before Florus. Imprisonment and torture were in the command. He had heard of my opulence, and I knew how little his insolent cupidity would regard the pardon under which I had returned. I determined to retire into

the mountains. But the Roman plunderer had the activity of his countrymen. On the very night of my receiving the summons, I was roused from sleep by the outcries of the retainers, who in that season of heat lay in the open air round the palace. I started from my bed only to see with astonishment the court-yards filled with cavalry, galloping in pursuit of the few peasants who still fought for their Lord. There was no time to be lost; the torches were already in the hands of the soldiery, and I must be taken, or burnt alive. Constantius was instantly at my side. I ordered the trumpet to be sounded on the hills, and we rushed out together, spear in hand. The Romans, alarmed by resistance, where they had counted upon capture without a blow, fell back. The interval was fatal. Their retreat was intercepted by the whole body of the peasantry, effectually roused. The scythe and reaping-hook were deadly weapons to horsemen cooped up between walls, and in midnight. No efforts of mine could stop the havoc, when once the fury of my people was roused. A few escaped, who had

broken wildly away in the first onset. The rest were left to cover the avenues with the first sanguinary offerings of the final war of Judea.

I felt that this escape could be but temporary; for the Roman pride and policy never forgave until the slightest stain of defeat was wiped away. All was consternation in my family; and the order for departure, whatever tears it cost, found no opposition. In a few hours our camels and mules were loaded, our horses caparisoned, and we were prepared to quit the short-lived pomp of the house of my fathers. Constantius alone did not appear. This noble-minded being had won even upon me, until I considered him as the substitute for my lost son, and I should have run the last hazard rather than leave him to the Roman mercy. With the women the interest was expressed by a declared resolution not to leave the spot until he was found. The caravan was broken up, and all desire of escape at an end.

At the close of a day of search through every

defile of the country, he was seen returning at the head of some peasants bearing a body on a litter. I flew to meet him. He was in deep affliction, and drawing off a mantle which covered the face, he showed me Septimius. "In the flight of the Romans," said he, "I saw a horseman making head against a crowd. His voice caught my ear. I rushed forward to save him, and he burst through the circle at full speed. But by the light of the torches I could perceive that he was desperately wounded. When day broke, I tracked him by his blood. His horse, gashed with scythes, at last fell under him. I found my unfortunate friend lying senseless beside a rill, to which he had crept for water."

Tears fell from his eyes as he told the brief story. I too remembered the generous interposition of the youth, and when I looked upon the paleness of those fine Italian features, that I had so lately seen lighted up with living spirit, and in the midst of a scene of regal luxury, I felt a pang for the uncertainty of human things.

But the painful part of the moral was spared us. The young Roman's wounds were stanched, and in an enemy and a Roman I found the means of paying a debt of gratitude. His appearance among the troops sent to seize me, had been only a result of his anxiety to save the father of his friends. He had accidentally discovered the nature of the order, and hoped to anticipate its execution. But he arrived only in time to be involved in the confusion of the flight. Pursued and wounded by the peasantry, he lost his way, and but for the generous perseverance of Constantius he must have died.

The public information which he brought was of the most important kind. In the Roman councils, the utter subjugation of Judea was resolved on. The last spark of national independence was to be extinguished, though in the blood of the last native; a Roman colony established in our lands; the Roman worship introduced; and Jerusalem profaned by a statue of Nero, and sacrifices to him as a god, on the

altar of the sanctuary. To crush the resistance of the people, the legions, to the amount of sixty thousand men, were under orders from proconsular Asia, Egypt, and Europe. The most distinguished captain of the empire, Vespasian, was called from Britain to the command, and the whole military strength of Rome was prepared to follow up the blow.

I summoned the chief men of the tribe, and in a general meeting was invested with the military command. My temperament was warlike. The seclusion and studies of my early life had but partially suppressed my natural delight in the vividness of martial achievement. But the cause that now summoned me was enough to have kindled the dullest peasant into the soldier. I had seen the discipline of the enemy. I had made myself master of their system of war. Fortifications wherever a stone could be piled upon a hill; provisions laid up in large quantities wherever they could be secure; small bodies of troops, practised in manœuvre, and perpetually in motion between

the fortresses; a general basis of operations, to which all the movements referred; were the simple principles that had made them conquerors of the world. I resolved to give them a speedy proof of their pupillage.

CHAPTER II.

I FELT that insurrection was to be no longer avoided. Whatever was the consequence, the sword must be unsheathed without delay. With Eleazar and Constantius, I cast my eyes over the map, and examined on what point the first blow should fall. The proverbial safety of a multitude of councillors, was obviously neglected in the smallness of my council; yet, few as we were, we differed upon every point but one, that of the certainty of our danger; the promptitude of Roman vengeance suffered no contest of opinion.

Eleazar, with a spirit as manly as ever faced hazard, yet gave his voice for delay.

"The sole hope of success," said he, "must depend on rousing the popular mind. The Roman troops are not to be beaten by any regular army in the world. If we attack them on the ordinary principles of war, the result can only be defeat, slaughter in dungeons, and deeper slavery. If the nation can be roused, numbers may prevail over discipline; variety of attacks may distract science; the desperate boldness of the insurgents may at length exhaust the Roman fortitude; and a glorious peace will then restore the country to that independence for which my life would be a glad and ready sacrifice. But you must first have the people with you, and for that purpose you must have the leaders of the people——."

"What!" interrupted I, "must we first mingle in the cabals of Jerusalem, and rouse the frigid debaters and disputers of the Sanhedrim into action? Are we first to conciliate the irreconcilable, to soften the furious, to purify the corrupt? If the Romans are to be our tyrants till we can teach patriotism to faction; we may as well build the dungeon at once, for to the

dungeon we are consigned for the longest life among us. Death or glory for me. There is no alternative between, not merely the half-slavery that we now live in and independence, but between the most condign suffering and the most illustrious security. If the people would rise, through the pressure of public injury, they must have risen long since; if from private violence, what town, what district, what family, has not its claims of deadly retribution! Yet here the people stand, after a hundred years of those continued stimulants to resistance, as unresisting as in the day when Pompey marched over the threshold of the Temple. I know your generous friendship, Eleazar, and fear that your anxiety to save me from the chances of the struggle, may bias your better judgment. But here I pledge myself, by all that constitutes the hohour of man, to strike at all risks a blow upon the Roman crest that shall echo through the land. What! commit our holy cause into the nursing of those pampered hypocrites whose utter baseness of heart you know still more deeply than I do? Linger, till those pestilent

profligates raise their price with Florus by betraying a design that will be the glory of every man who draws a sword in it? vainly, madly, ask a brood that, like the serpent, engender and fatten among the ruins of their country, to discard their venom, to cast their fangs, to feel for human feelings? As well ask the serpent itself to rise from the original curse. It is the irrevocable nature of faction to be base, till it can be mischievous; to lick the dust until it can sting; to creep on its belly until it can twist its folds round the victim. No! let the old pensionaries, the bloated hangers-on in the train of every governor, the open sellers of their country for filthy lucre, betray me when I leave it in their power. To the field I say; once and for all, to the field."

My mind was fevered by the perplexity of the time, and was at no period patient of contradiction. I was about to leave the chamber, when Constantius gravely stopped me.

"My father," said he, with a voice calmer than his countenance, "you have hurt our noble kinsman's feelings. It is not in an hour

when our unanimity may fail, that we should suffer dissensions between those whose hearts are alike embarked in this great cause. Let me mediate between you."

He led Eleazar back from the casement to which he had withdrawn to cool his blood, burning with the offence of my language. "Eleazar is right. The Romans are irresistible by any force short of the whole people. They have the full military possession of the country. All your fortresses, all your posts, all your passes; they are as familiar as you are with every defile, mountain, and marsh; they surround you with conquered provinces on the north, east, and south; your western barrier is open to them, while it is shut to you; the sea is the high road of their armies, while at their first forbidding you dare not launch a galley between Libanus and Idumea. Nothing can counterbalance this local superiority but the rising of your whole people."

"But are we to intrigue with the talkers in Jerusalem for this?" interrupted I: "What less than a descended thunderbolt could rouse

them to a sense, that there is even a Heaven above them?"

"Yet we must have them with us," said Constantius, "for we must have all. Universality is the spirit of an insurrectionary war. If I were commander of a revolt, I should feel greater confidence of success at the head of a single province, in which every human being from boyhood upwards was against the enemy, than at the head of an empire partially in arms. The mind even of the rudest spearsman is a great portion of him. The boldest shrinks from the consciousness that hostility is on all sides, that whether marching or at rest, watching or sleeping, by night or by day, enmity concealed or visible is round him; that it is in the very air he breathes, in the very food he eats, that he can never feel for a moment secure; that every face he sees, is the face of one who wishes him dead; that every knife, even every trivial instrument of human use, may be turned into a shedder of his blood. Those things perpetually confronting his mind, break it down; he grows reckless, miserable, undisciplined, and a dastard."

"But," observed Eleazar, "the sufferings of the troops are seldom allowed to affect the generals. And to men who have no object but conquest and plunder, the constant robbery of an insurrectionary war, must render it a favourite command."

"Let me speak from experience," said Constantius: "Two years ago I was attached with a squadron of galleys to the expedition against the tribes of Mount Taurus. While the galleys wintered in Cyprus, I followed the troops up the hills. No language can describe the discontent even of that most unmurmuring of all armies, a Roman army. Nothing had been omitted that could counteract the severity of the season. Tents, provisions, clothing adapted to the hills, even luxuries despatched from the islands, gave the camps almost the indulgencies of cities. The physical hardships of the campaign were trivial, compared with those of hundreds, in which the Romans had beaten regular armies. Yet the discontent was indescribable, from the perpetual and unrelaxing alarms of the service. The mountaineers were not nume-

rous, they were but half armed, disciplined they were not at all. A Roman centurion would have out-manœuvred all their captains. But they were brave, they knew nothing but to kill or be killed, and it made no difference to them whether death did his work by night or by day. Sleep was scarcely possible. To sit down on a march, was to be levelled at by a score of arrows; to pursue the archers, was to be lured into some hollow, where a fragment of the rock above, or a felled tree, was ready to crush the heavy legionaries. We chased them from hill to hill; we might as well have chased the vultures and eagles, that duly followed us, with the perfect certainty of not being disappointed of their meal. Wherever the enemy showed themselves, they were beaten, but our victory was totally fruitless. The next turn of the mountain road, was a strong-hold from which we had to expect a new storm of arrows, lances, and fragments of rock. The mountaineers always had a retreat. If we drove them from the pinnacles of the hills, they were in a moment in the valleys, where we must follow

them at the risk of falling down precipices and being swallowed up by torrents, in which the strongest swimmer in the legions could not live for a moment. If we drove them from the valleys, we saw them scaling the mountains as if they wore wings, and scoffing at our tardy and helpless movements, encumbered as we were with baggage and armour. We at length forced our way through the mountain range, and when with the loss of half the army we had reached their citadel, we found that the work was to be begun again. To remain where we were, was to be starved; we had defeated the barbarians, but they were as unconquered as ever, and our only resource was to retrace our steps, which we did at the expense of a battle every morning, noon, evening, and night, with a ruinous loss of lives, and the total abandonment of every thing in the shape of baggage. The defeat was of course hushed up; and according to the old Roman policy, the escape was coloured into a victory; I had the honour of carrying back the general to Italy, where he was decreed an Ovation, a

laurel crown, and a crowd of the usual distinctions: but the triumph belonged to the men of the mountains; and till our campaign is forgotten, no Roman officer will look for his laurels in Mount Taurus again."

"Such for ever be the fate of wars against the natural freedom of the brave," said I: "but the Cilicians had the advantage of an almost impenetrable country. Three fourths of Judea are already in the enemy's possession."

"No country in which man can exist, can be impenetrable to an invading army," was the reply: "Natural defences are trifling before the vigour and dexterity of man. The true barrier is in the hearts of the defenders. We were masters of the whole range. We could not find a thousand men assembled on any one point. Yet we were not the actual possessors of a mile of ground beyond the square of our camp. We never saw a day without an attack, nor ever lay down at night without the certainty of being startled from our sleep by some fierce attempt at a surprise. It was this perpetual anxiety that broke the spirits of the

troops. All was in hostility to them. They felt that there was not a secure spot within the horizon. Every man whom they saw, they knew to be one who either had drawn Roman blood, or who longed in his inmost soul to draw it. They dared not pass by a single rock without a search for a lurking enemy. Even a felled tree might conceal some daring savage, who was content to die on the Roman spears, after having flung his unerring lance among the ranks, or shot an arrow that went through the thickest corslet. I have seen the boldest of the legionaries sink on the ground in absolute exhaustion of heart, with this hopeless and wearying warfare. I have seen men with muscles as strong as iron, weep like children, through mere depression. With the harsher spirits, all was execration and bitterness, even to the verge of mutiny. With the more generous, all was regret at the waste of honour, mingled with involuntary admiration of the barbarians who thus defied the haughty courage and boasted discipline of the conquerors of mankind. The secret spring of their resistance,

was its universality. Every man was embarked in the common cause. There was no room for evasion, under cover of a party disposed to peace: there was no Roman interest among the people, in which timidity or selfishness could take refuge. The national cause had not a lukewarm friend: the invaders had not a dubious enemy. The line was drawn with the sword, and the cause of national independence triumphed, as it ought to triumph."

"But we are a people split into as many varieties of opinion, as there are provinces or even villages in Judea," observed Eleazar. "The Jew loves to follow the opinions of the head of his family, the chief man of his tribe, or even of the priest, who has long exercised an influence over his district. We have not the slavishness of the Asiatic, but we still want the personal choice of the European. We must secure the leaders, if we would secure the people."

"Men," said Constantius, "are intrinsically the same in every climate under heaven. They will all hate hazard, where nothing but hazard

is to be gained. They will all linger for ages in slavery, where the taskmaster has the policy to avoid sudden violence; but they will all encounter the severest trials, where, in the hour of injury, they find a leader, prepared to guide them to honour."

"And to that extent they shall have trial of me," I exclaimed: "Before another Sabbath, I shall make the experiment of my fitness to be the leader of my countrymen. If I fail, none but myself will suffer: if I succeed, Judea shall be what she was before the foot of the Italian stained her sacred territory. But no parleying for me with the dotards and slaves of Jerusalem. At the head of my own tribe, I will march to the city, before the enemy can be aware of my purpose, seize upon the garrison, and from Herod's palace, from the very chair of the Procurator, will I at once silence the voice of faction, clamour as it may; and lift the banner to the tribes of Israel."

"Nobly conceived," said Constantius, his countenance glowing with animation, "blow upon blow is the true tactic of an insurrection-

ary war. We must strike at once, suddenly and fatally. The sword of him who would triumph in a revolt, must not merely sound on the enemy's helmet, but cut through it."

"But to Jerusalem," said Eleazar, "the objections are palpable. The Roman cohorts fully garrison the castles. The city would be out of hope of a surprise, would be difficult to capture, and beyond all chance to keep. The whole force of the legions would be directed upon it; and if the revolt failed there, it must be without resource in the land."

"Ever tardy, thwarting, and contradictory," I exclaimed. "If the Roman sceptre lay under my heel, I should find Eleazar forbidding me to crush it. My mind is fixed; I will hear no more." I started from my seat, and paced the room. Eleazar approached me: "My brother," said he, holding out his hand with a forgiving smile, "we must not differ. I honour your heart, Salathiel; I know your talents; there is not a man in Judea, whom I should be prouder to see at the head of its councils. I agree with you, that a blow should be struck, an instant

and a deadly blow; and now I offer you myself and every man whom I can influence, to follow you to the last extremity. The only question is, where the blow is to fall."

Constantius had been gazing on the chart of Judea, which lay between us on the table. "If it be our object," said he, "to combine injury to the Romans with actual advantage to ourselves, to make a trial where failure cannot be ruinous, and where success may be of measureless value, here is the spot." He pointed to Masada.

The fortress of Masada was built by Herod the Great, as his principal magazine of arms. A gallant and successful soldier, one of his luxuries was the variety and costliness of his weapons, and the royal armoury of Masada was renowned throughout Asia. Pride in the possession of such a trophy, probably aided by some reverence for the memory of the friend of Cæsar and Anthony, whom the legions still almost worshipped as tutelar genii, originally saved it from the usual Roman spoliation. But no native foot was permitted to enter the armoury,

and mysterious stories of the sights and sounds of those splendid halls, filled the ears of the people. Masada was held to be the talisman of the Roman power over Judea, by more than the people; the belief had made its way among the legions; and no capture could be a bolder omen of the war.

I still preferred the more direct blow on Jerusalem; and declaimed on the vital importance in all wars, of seizing on the capital. But I was controlled. Eleazar's grave wisdom, and the science of Constantius, deprived me of argument; and the attack on Masada was finally planned before we left the chamber. Nothing could be more primitive than our plan for the siege of the most scientific fortification in Judea, crowded with men, and furnished with every implement and machine of war that Roman experience could supply. Our simple preparations were a few ropes for ladders, a few hatchets for cutting down gates and palisadoes, and a few faggots for setting on fire what we could. Five hundred of our tribe, who had never thrown a lance but in hunting, formed

our expedition; and, at the head of those, Constantius, who claimed the exploit by the right of discovery, was to march at dusk, conceal himself in the forests during the day, and on the evening of his arrival within reach of the fortress, attempt it by surprise. Eleazar was, in the mean time, to rouse his retainers, and I was to await at their head the result of the enterprise, and if successful, unfurl the standard of Naphtali, and advance on Jerusalem.

MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL * THE TANJORE

CHAPTER III.

The rest of this memorable day lingered on with a tardiness beyond description. The future pressed on my mind with an intolerable weight. The criminal who counts the watches of the night before his execution, has but a faint image of that fierce and yet pining anxiety, that loathing of all things unconnected with the one mighty event, yet that dread of suffering it to dwell upon his mind; the mixture of hopelessness and hope, the sickly panting of the heart, the tenfold and morbid nervousness of every nerve in his frame; which make up the suspense of the conspirator in even the noblest cause.

When the hour of banquet came, I sat down in the midst of magnificence, as was the custom of my rank; the table was filled with guests; all around me was gaiety and pomp, high-born men, handsome women, richly attired attendants; plate, the work of Tyrian and Greek artists, in its massive beauty; walls covered with tissues; music filling the air cooled by fountains of perfumed waters. I felt as little of them, as if I were in the wilderness. The richest wines, the most delicate fruits, palled on my taste. A heaviness, an almost Lethean oblivion of all before my eyes, closed up every feeling; if I had one wish, it was that for the next forty-eight hours oblivion might amount to insensibility! At my wife and daughters I ventured but one glance. I thought that I had never before seen them look so fitted to adorn their rank, to be the models of grace, loveliness, and honour to society; and the thought smote my heart in the midst of my contemplation!—How soon all this may be changed! Will another sun-set find those lovely and beloved beings here? May they not be fugitives

and beggars through the land, or, worse a thousand times, be in the power of the Roman? And this is my doing. Here sit I, in the midst of this innocent and happy circle, drawing ruin upon their heads, and writing with a cloudy hand the sentence of subversion upon these joyous walls. Here sit I, like the tempter in paradise—to involve in my own destruction all that is pure and peaceful, and confiding and happy! With what terror would they look upon me, if they could at this instant see the evils that I am summoning round them!—" if they could read but my bosom——"

My eyes sought Constantius; he had just returned from his preparations, and came in glowing with the enthusiasm of the soldier. He sat down beside Salome, and his cheek gradually turned of the hue of death. He sat, like myself, absorbed in frequent reverie; and to the playful solicitations of Salome, that he would indulge in the table after his fatigue, he gave forced smiles and broken answers. The future was plainly busy with us both; with all that the heart of man could love beside him,

he felt the pang of contrast; and, when on accidentally lifting his eyes they met mine, the single conscious look interchanged, told the bitter perturbation that preyed on both in the hearts' core.

I soon rose; and, under pretence of having letters to despatch to our friends in Rome, retired to my chamber. There lay the chart still on the table, marked by the pencil lines of the route to Masada. Heavens! with what breathlessness I traced every point and bearing of it! How eagerly I pursued the mountain paths in which the movement might be concealed; how anxiously I marked the spaces of open country in which it must be exposed to the Roman eye! But the chart itself! There, within a space over which I could stretch my arm, was my world! In that little boundary was I to struggle against the supremacy that covered the earth! Those fairy hills, those scarcely visible rivers, those remote cities, dots of human habitation, were to be henceforth the places of siege and battle, memorable for the destruction of human life; engrossing every energy of

the mind and frame of myself and my countrymen; and big with the fates of generations on generations!

It was dusk; and I was still devouring with my eyes this chart of prophecy, when Constantius entered. "I have come," said he gravely, "to bid you farewell for the night. In two days I hope we shall all meet again."

"No, my brave son," I interrupted. "We do not leave each other to-night."

He looked surprised. "I must be gone this instant. Eleazar has done his part with the activity of his honest and manly mind. Two miles off, in the valley under the date-grove, I have left five hundred of the finest fellows that ever sat a charger. In half an hour Sirius rises; then we go, and then let the governor of Masada look to it. Farewell, and wish me good fortune."

"May every angel that protects the righteous cause, hover above your head," I exclaimed; "But, no farewell; for we go together."

"Do you doubt my conduct of the enterprise?" pronounced he strongly. "'Tis true

I have been in the Roman service. But that service I hated from the bottom of my soul. I was a Greek; and bound to Rome no longer than she could hold me in her chain. If I could have had men to follow me, I should have done in Cyprus what I now do in Judea. The countryman of Leonidas, Cimon, and Timoleon, was not born to hug his slavery. I am now a son of Judea; to her my affections have been transplanted, and to her, if she does not reject me, shall my means and my life be given!"

He relaxed the belt from his waist, and flung it with his scimitar on the ground. I lifted it, and gave it again to his hand.

"No, Constantius," I replied. "I honour your zeal, and would confide in you, if the world hung upon the balance. But I cannot bear the thought of lingering here, while you are in the field. The misery of suspense is intolerable. My mind, within those few hours, has been on the rack. I must take the chances with you."

"It is utterly impossible," was his firm answer. "Your absence would excite instant

suspicion. The Roman spies are everywhere. The natural result follows, that our march would be intercepted; and I am not sure, but that even now we may be too late. That inconceivable sagacity by which the Romans seem to be masters of every man's secret, has been already at work; troops were seen on the route to Masada this very day. Our horses may get before them; but if the garrison be reinforced, the expedition is undone. But a still more immediate result would be the destruction of all here. Let it be known that the prince of Naphtali has left his palace, and the dozen squadrons of Thracian horse which I saw within those four days at Tiberias, will be riding through your domains before the next sun-set."

This reflection checked me. "Well then," said I, "go; and the protection of Him whose pillar of cloud led his people through the sea and through the desert, be your shelter and your light in the day of peril!"

I pressed his hand; he turned to depart, but came back; and, after a slight hesitation, said —"If Salome had once offended her noble

father by her flight, the offence was mine.—Forgive her; for her heart is still the heart of your child. She loves you. If I fall, let the memory of our disobedience lie in my grave!"—His voice stopped, and mine could not break the silence.

"Let what will come," resumed he with an effort. "Tell Salome, that the last word on my lips was her beloved name!" He left the chamber, and I felt as if a portion of my being had gone forth from me.

This day was one of the many festivals of our country, and my halls echoed with sounds of enjoyment. The immense gardens glittered with illumination in all the graceful devices, of which our people were such masters; and when I looked out for the path of Constantius, I was absolutely pained by the sight of so much fantastic pleasure, while my hero was pursuing his way through darkness and solitude.

At length the festival was over. The lights twinkled thinner among the arbours, the sounds of glad voices sank, and I saw from my casement the evidences of departure in the trains of

torches that moved up the surrounding hills. The sight of a starlight sky has always been to me among the softest and surest healers of the heart; and I gazed upon that mighty scene which throws all human cares into such littleness, until my composure returned.

The last of the guests had left the palace before I ventured to descend. The vases of perfumes still breathed in the hall of the evening banquet; the alabaster lamps were still burning; but, excepting the attendants who waited on my steps at a distance, and whose fixed figures might have been taken for statues, there was not a living being near me of the laughing and joyous crowd that had so lately glittered, danced, sported, and smiled, within those sumptuous walls. Yet, what was this but a picture of the common rotation of life? Or, by a yet more immediate moral, what was it but a picture of the desertion that might be coming upon me and mine?

I sat down to extinguish my sullen philosophy in wine. But no draught that ever passed the lips could extinguish the low fever

that brooded on my spirit. I dreaded that the presence of my family might force out my heavy secret, and lingered, with my eyes gazing without sight, on the costly covering of the board.

A sound of music from an inner hall, to which Miriam and her daughters had retired, aroused me. I stood at the door, gazing on the group within. The music was a hymn, with which they closed the customary devotions of the day. But there was something in its sound to me that I had never felt before. At the moment when those sweet voices were pouring out the gratitude of hearts as innocent and glowing as the hearts of angels, a scene of horror might be acting. The husband of Salome might be struggling under the Roman swords; he might be lying a corpse under the feet of the cavalry, that before morn might bring the news of his destruction in the flames that startled us from our sleep, and the swords that pierced our bosoms.

And what beings were those thus appointed for the sacrifice? The lapse of even a few

years had perfected the natural beauty of my daughters. Salome's sparkling eye was more brilliant; her graceful form was moulded into more easy elegance; and her laughing lip was wreathed with a more playful smile. Never did I see a creature of deeper witchery. My Esther, my noble and dear Esther, who was, perhaps, the dearer to me from her inheriting a tinge of my melancholy, yet a melancholy exalted by genius and ardour of soul into a charm, was this night the leader of the song of holiness. Her large uplifted eye glowed with the brightness of one of the stars on which it was fixed. Her hands fell on the harp in almost the attitude of prayer; and the expression of her lofty and intellectual countenance, crimsoned with the theme, told of a communion with thoughts and beings above mortality. The hymn was done; the voices had ceased; yet the inspiration still burned in her soul; her hands still shook from the chords harmonies, sweet, but of the wildest and boldest brilliancy; bursts and flights of sound, like the rushing of the distant waterfall at night, or the solemn

echoes, and mighty complainings of the forest in the first swell of the storm. Miriam and Salome sat beholding her in silent admiration and love.

The magnificent dress of the Jewish female could not heighten the power of such beauty. But it filled up the picture. The jewelled tiaras, the embroidered shawls, the high-wrought and massive armlets, the silken robes and sashes fringed with pearl and diamond, the profusion of dazzling ornament that makes the Oriental costume to this day, were the true habits of the forms that then sat unconscious of the delighted yet anxious eye that drank in the joy of their presence. I saw before me the pomp of princedoms, investing forms worthy of thrones.

My entrance broke off the harper's spell, and I found it a hard task to answer the fond inquiries and touching congratulations that flowed upon me. But the hour waned, and I was again left alone for the few minutes which it was my custom to give to meditation before I retired to rest. I threw open the low door that

opened into a garden thick with the Persian rose, and filling the air with cool fragrance. At my first glance upwards I saw Sirius, he was on the verge of the horizon! The thoughts of the day again gathered over my soul. I idly combined the fate of Constantius with the decline of the star that he had taken for his signal. My senses lost their truth, or contributed to deceive me. I fancied that I heard sounds of conflict; the echo of horses' feet rang in my ears. A meteor that slowly sailed across the sky, struck me as a supernatural summons. My brain, fearfully excitable since my great misfortune, at length kindled up such strong realities, that I found myself on the point of betraying the burden of my spirit by some palpable disclosure.

Twice had I reached the door of Miriam's chamber, to tell her my whole perplexity. But I heard the voice of her attendants within, and again shrank from the tale. I ranged the long galleries, perplexed with capricious and strange torments of the imagination.

"If he should fall," said I, "how shall I

atone for the cruelty of sending him upon a service of such hopeless hazard—a few peasants with naked breasts against Roman battlements! What soldier would not ridicule my folly in hoping success? What man would not charge me with scorn of the life of my kindred? The blood of my tribe will be upon my head for ever. The base will take advantage of their fate to degrade my name with the nation. The brave will disdain him who sent others to the peril which he dared not share. There sinks the prince of Naphtali! In the grave of my gallant son and his companions is buried my dream of martial honour; the sword that strikes him, cuts to the ground my lost ambition of delivering my country.

The advice of Constantius returned to my mind, but, like the meeting of two tides, it was only to increase the tumult within. I felt the floor shake under my hurried tread. I smote my forehead, it was covered with drops of agony. The voices within my wife's chamber had ceased. But was I to rouse her from her sleep, perhaps the last quiet sleep that she was

ever to take, only to hear intelligence that must make her miserable?

This reflection let in upon me a new flood of anxieties. "If misfortune should come, with what face shall I ever be able to look upon my family, upon the daughter that I have widowed, upon the wife, upon the child, whose sorrow, even whose silence will torture me? And how long must I keep my secret? For four days! while I am scarcely able to bear its suspense for an hour."

I leaned my throbbing forehead upon one of the marble tables, as if to imbibe coolness from the stone. I felt a light hand upon mine. Miriam stood beside me. "Salathiel!" pronounced she in an unshaken voice. "There is something painful on your mind. Whether it be only a duty on your part to disclose it to me, I shall not say. But if you think me fit to share your happier hours, must I have the humiliation of feeling that I am to be excluded from your confidence, in the day when those hours may be darkened?"

I was silent, for to speak was beyond my

strength, but I pressed her delicate fingers to my bosom.

"Misfortune, my dear husband," resumed she, "is trivial, but when it reaches the mind. Oh, rather let me encounter it in the bitterest privations of poverty and exile; rather let me be a nameless outcast to the latest year I have to live, than feel the bitterness of being forgotten by the heart to which, come life or death, mine is bound for ever and ever."

I glanced up at her. Tears dropped on her cheeks; but her voice was firm. "I have observed you," said she, "in deep agitation during the day; but I forbore to press you for the cause. I have listened now, till long past midnight, to the sound of your feet, to the sound of groans and pangs wrung from your bosom; nay, to exclamations, and broken sentences, which have let me most involuntarily into the knowledge that this disturbance arises from the state of our country. I know your noble nature, Salathiel; and I say to you, in this solemn and

sacred hour of danger, follow the guidance of that noble nature."

I cast my arms about her neck, and imprinted a kiss as true as ever came from human love upon her lips. She had taken a weight from my soul. I detailed the whole design to her. She listened with many a change from red to pale, and many a tremour of the white hand that lay in mine. When I ceased, the woman in her broke forth in tears and sighs. "Yet," said she, "you must go. Perish the thought, that for the selfish desire of looking even upon you in safety here, I should hazard the dearer honour of my lord. It is right that Judea should make the attempt to shake off her tyranny. It is wise to lose not a moment, when the attempt is fully resolved on. You must be the leader, and you must purchase that incomparable distinction, by showing that you possess the qualities of a leader. The people can never be deceived in their own cause. Kings and courts may be deluded into the choice of incapacity; but the man whom a people will

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follow from their firesides to the field, must bear the palpable stamp of wisdom, energy, and valour."

"Admirable being!" I exclaimed, "worthy to be honoured while Israel has a name. Then, I have your consent to follow Constantius. By speed I may reach him, before he can have arrived at the object of the enterprise. Farewell, my best beloved—farewell." She fell into my arms in a passion of tears.

She at length recovered, and said, "This is weakness, the mere weakness of surprise. Yes; go, Prince of Naphtali. No man must take the glory from you. Constantius is a hero; but you must be a king, and more than a king; not the struggler for the baubles of royalty, but for the glories of the rescuer of the people of God. The first blow of the war must not be given by another, dear as he is. The first triumph, the whole triumph, must be my lord's." She knelt down, and poured out her soul to Heaven in eloquent supplication for my safety. I listened in homage. "Now go," sighed she, "and remember, in the day of battle, who will then

be in prayer for you. Court no unnecessary peril; for if you perish, which of us would desire to live!" She again sank upon her knees; and I in reverent silence descended from the gallery.

CHAPTER IV.

My preparations were quickly made. I divested myself of my robes, led out my favourite barb, flung an alhaik over my shoulders, and by the help of my Arab turban might have passed for a courier or a plunderer in any corner of Syria. This was done unseen of any eye; for the crowd of attendants that thronged the palace in the day, were now stretched through the courts, or on the terraces, fast asleep, under the doubled influence of a day of feasting, and a night of tepid summer air.

I rode without stopping, till the sun began to throw up his yellow rays through the vapours

of the lake of Tiberias. To ascertain alike the progress of Constantius, and the chances of meeting with some of those Roman squadrons which were perpetually moving between the fortresses, I struck off the road into a forest, tied my barb to a tree, and set forth to reconnoitre.

Travelling on foot was the common mode of a country which, like Judea, was but little fitted for the breed of horses; and I found no want of companions. Pedlars, peasants, disbanded soldiers, and probably thieves, diversified my knowledge of mankind within a few miles. I escaped under the sneer of the soldier, and the compassion of the peasant. The first glance at my wardrobe satisfied the robber that I was not worth the exercise of his profession, or perhaps that I was a brother of the trade. But I found none of the repulsiveness that makes the intercourse of higher life so unproductive. Confidence was on every tongue. All the secrets of their families were at my disposal; and I discovered, even in the sandy roads of Palestine, that to be a judicious lis-

tener, is one of the first talents for popularity all over the world.

But, of my peculiar objects I could learn nothing, though every man whom I met had some story of the Romans. I ascertained to my surprise, that the intelligence which Septimius brought from the very penetralia of the imperial cabinet, was known to the multitude. Every voice of the populace was full of a tale, which probably was reckoned among the profoundest secrets of the state. I have made the same observation in later æras, and found even in the most formal mysteries of the most frowning governments, the rumour of the streets outrun the cabinets. So it must be, while diplomatists have tongues, and while women and domestics have curiosity.

But if I were to rely on the accuracy of those willing politicians, the cause of independence was without hope. Human nature loves to make itself important; and the narrator of the marvellous is always great, according to the distention of his news. Those who had seen a cohort, invariably magnified it into a legion: a

troop of cavalry covered half a province; and the detachments marching from Asia Minor and Egypt for our invasion, were reckoned by the very largest numeration within the teller's capacity.

As I was sitting by a rivulet moistening some of the common bread of the country, which I had brought to aid my disguise; I entered into conversation with one of those unhoused exiles of society, whom at the first glance we discern to be nature's commoners, indebted to no man for food, raiment, or habitation, the native dweller on the road. He had some of the habitual jest of those who have no care; and congratulated me on the size of my table, the meadow; and the unadulterated purity of my potation, the brook. He informed me that he came direct from the Nile, where he had seen the son of Vespasian at the head of a hundred thousand men. A Syrian soldier, returning to Damascus, who joined our meal, felt indignant at the discredit thus thrown on a general, under whom he had received three pike wounds, and leave to beg his way home.

He swore by Ashtaroth, that the force under Titus was at least twice the number. A third wanderer, a Roman veteran, of whom the remainder was covered over with glorious patches, arrived just in time to relieve his general from the disgrace of so limited a command, and another hundred thousand was instantly put under his orders; sanctioned by asseverations in the name of Jupiter Capitolinus, and as many others of the calendar as the patriot could pronounce. This rapid recruiting threw the former authorities into the back-ground; and the old legionary was, for the rest of the meal, the undisputed leader of the conversation.

"To suppose," said the veteran, "that those circumcised dogs can stand against a regular-bred Roman general, is sacrilege. Half his army, or a tenth of his army, would walk through the land, north and south, east and west, as easily as I could walk through this brook."

"No doubt of it," said the Syrian, "if they had some of our cavalry for flanking and foraging."

"Aye, for any thing but fighting, comrade," said the Roman with a laugh.

"No; you leave out another capital quality," observed the beggar: "none can deny, that whoever may be first in the advance, the Syrians will be first in the retreat. There are two manœuvres to make a complete soldier—how to get into battle, and how to get out of it. Now the Syrians manage the latter in the most undoubted perfection."

"Silence, villain," exclaimed the Syrian, "or you have robbed your last hen-roost."

"He says nothing but the truth for all that," interrupted the veteran. "But neither of us taxed your cavalry with cowardice. No; it was pure virtue. They had too much modesty to take the way into the field before other troops; and too much humanity not to teach them how to sleep without broken bones."

The beggar, delighted at the prospect of a quarrel, gave the assent, that more embroils the fray.

"Mark Anthony did not say so," murmured the indignant Syrian.

"Mark Anthony!" cried the Roman, starting upon his single leg, "glory to his name: but what could a fellow like you know about Mark Anthony?"

"I only served with him," drily replied the Syrian.

"Then here's my hand for you," exclaimed the brave old man: "we are comrades. I would love even a dog that had seen the face of Mark Anthony. He was the first man that I ever carried buckler under. There was a soldier for you; such men are not made in this puling age. He could fight from morn till night, and carouse from night till morn, and never lose his seat on his charger in the field for the day after. I have seen him run half naked through the snows in Armenia, and walk in armour in the hottest day of Egypt. He loved the soldier, and the soldier loved him. So, comrade, here's to the health of Mark Anthony. Ah, we shall never see such men again."

He drew out a flask of ration wine, closely akin to vinegar, of which he hospitably gave us

each a cup; and after pouring a libation to his hero's memory, whom he evidently placed among the gods, swallowed the draught, in which we devoutly followed his example.

"Yet," said the beggar, "if Anthony were a great man, he has left little men enough behind him. There's, for instance, the present gay procurator; six months in the gout, the other six months drunk, or if sober, only thinking where he can rob next. This will bring the government into trouble before long, or I'm much mistaken. For my part, I pledge myself, if he should take any part of my property——"

——"Why, if he did," said the Syrian, "I give him credit for magic. He would find a crop of wheat in the sand, or coin money of the air. Where is your property?"

"Comrade," said the veteran, laughing, "recollect; if the saying be true, that people are least to be judged of by the outside, the rags of our jovial friend must hide many a shekel; and, as to where his property lies, he has a wide estate who has the world for his portion;

and property enough, who thinks all his own that he can lay his fingers on."

The laugh was now loud against the beggar. He however bore all like one accustomed to the buffets of fortune; and, joining in it, said, "Whatever may be my talents in that way, there is no great chance of showing them in this company; but if you should be present at the sack of Masada, and I should meet you on your way back——"

——"Masada!" exclaimed I instinctively.

"Yes, I left the town three days ago. On that very morning an order arrived to prepare for the coming of the great and good Florus, who in his wisdom, feeling the want of gold, has determined to fill up the hollows of the military chest and his own purse, by stripping the armoury of every thing that can sell for money. My intelligence is from the best authority. The governor's principal bath-slave told it to one of the damsels of the steward's department, with whom the Ethiopian is mortally in love; and the damsel, in a moment of tenderness, told it to me. In fact, to let you

into my secret, I am now looking out for Florus, in whose train I intend to make my way back into this gold mine."

"The villain!" cried the veteran, "disturb the arms of the dead! Why, they say that it has the very corslet and buckler that Mark Anthony wore when he marched against the Idumeans."

"I fear more the disturbance of the arms of the living," said the Syrian. "The Jews will take it for granted that the Romans are giving up the business in despair; and if I'm a true man, there will be blood before I get home."

"No fear of that, fellow soldier," said the veteran, gaily; "you have kept your two legs, and when they have so long carried you out of harm's way, it would be the worst treatment possible to leave you in it at last. But there is something in what you say. I had a dream last night. I thought I saw the country in a blaze, and when I started from my sleep my ears were filled with a sound like the trampling of ten thousand cavalry."

I drew my breath quick; and, to conceal my

emotion, gathered up the fragments of our meal. On completing my work, I found the beggar's eye fixed on me :—he smiled.

"I too had a dream last night," said he, "and of much the same kind. I thought that I saw a cloud of cavalry riding as fast as horse could lay hoof to ground; I never saw a more dashing set, since my first campaign upon the highways of this wicked world. I'll be sworn that, whatever their errand may be, such riders will not come back without it. Their horses' heads were turned towards Masada, and I am now between two minds whether I may not mention my dream to the procurator himself."

I found his keen eye turned on me again. "Absurd!" said I. "He would recommend you only to his lictor."

"I rather think he would recommend me to his treasurer, for I never had a dream that seemed so like a fact. I should not be surprised to find that I had been sleeping with my eyes open."

His look convinced me that I was known.

I touched his hand, while the soldiers were busy packing up their cups, and showed him gold. He smiled carelessly. I laid my hand on my poniard; he but smiled again.

"The sun is burning out," said he, "and I can stand talking here no longer. Farewell, brave soldiers, and safe home to you! Farewell, Arab, and safe home to those that you are looking after!" He stalked away, and as he passed me, said in a low voice, "Glory to Naphtali!"

After exchanging good wishes with the old men, I followed him; he led the way towards the wood at a pace which kept me at a distance. When I reached the shade he stopped, and prostrated himself before me.

"Will my lord," said he, "forgive the presumption of his servant? This day, when I first met you, your disguise deceived me. I bear intelligence from your friends." I caught the fragment of papyrus from him, and read:—"All's well. We have hitherto met with nothing to oppose us. To-morrow night we shall be on the ground. If no addition be made to

the force within, the surprise will be complete. Our cause itself is victory. Health to all we love!"

"Your mission is now done," said I. "Go on to Naphtali, and you shall be rewarded as your activity has deserved."

"No," replied he, with the easy air of a licensed humorist, "I have but two things to think of in this world—my time and my money; of one of them I have infinitely more than I well know how to spend; and of the other infinitely less. I expected to have killed a few days in going up to Naphtali. But that hope has been cut off by my finding you half way. I will now try Florus, and get rid of a day or two with that most worthy of men."

"That I forbid," interrupted I.

"Not, if you will trust one whom your noble son has trusted. I am not altogether without some dislike to the Romans myself, nor something between contempt and hatred for Gessius Florus." His countenance darkened at the name. "I tell you," pronounced he bitterly, "that fellow's pampered carcass this

day contains as black a mass of villany as stains the earth. I have an old account to settle with him." His voice swelled. "I was once no rambler, no outcast of the land. I lived on the side of Hermon, lovely Hermon! I was affianced to a maiden of my kindred, as sweet a flower as ever blushed with love and joy. Our bridal day was fixed. I went to Cæsarea-Philippi to purchase some marriage presents. When I returned, I found nothing but women weeping, and men furious with impotent rage. My bride was gone. A Roman troop had surrounded her father's house in the night, and torn her away. Wild, distracted, nay, I believe raving mad, I searched the land. I kept life in me only that I might recover or revenge her. I abandoned property, friends, all! I at length made the discovery." To hide his perturbation, he turned away. "Powers of justice and vengeance, are there no thunders for such things? She had been seen by that hoary profligate. She was carried off by him. She spurned his insults. He ordered her to be chained, to be starved, to be lashed." Tears

burst from his eyes.—" She still spurned him. She implored to die. She called upon my name in her misery.—Wretch that I was, what could I, a worm, do under the heel of the tyrant?—But I saw her at last:—I made my way into the dungeon. There sat she, pale as the stone to which she was chained; a silent, sightless, bloodless, mindless skeleton. I called to her: she knew nothing. I pressed my lips to hers: she never felt them. I bathed her cold hands in my tears. I fell at her feet. I prayed to her but to pronounce one word; to give some sign of remembrance; to look on me. She sat like a statue; her reason was gone, gone for ever!"

He flung himself upon the ground, and writhed and groaned before me. To turn him from a subject of such sorrow, I asked what he meant to do by his intercourse with Florus.

" To do? not to stab him in his bed; not to poison him in his banquet; not to smite him with that speedy death, which would be mercy;—no, but to force him into ruin step

by step; to gather shame, remorse, and anguish round him, cloud on cloud; to mix evil in his cup with such exquisite slowness, that he shall taste every drop; to strike him only so far, that he may feel the pang without being stunned; to mingle so much of hope in his undoing, that he may never enjoy the vigour of despair; to sink him into his own Tartarus inch by inch, till every fibre has its particular agony." He yelled, suddenly rose from the ground, and rushed forward and threaded the thickets with swiftness that made pursuit in vain.

CHAPTER V.

The violence of the beggar's anguish, and the strong probabilities of his story engrossed me so much, that I at first regretted the extraordinary flight, which put it out of my power to offer him any assistance. I returned with a feeling of disappointment to the spot where I had left my horse, and was riding towards the higher country to avoid the enemy's straggling parties, when I heard a loud outcry. On a crag so distant, that I thought human speed could scarcely have reached it in the time, I saw this strange being making all kinds of signals, sometimes pointing to me, then to some object below him; and uttering a cry which

might easily be mistaken for the howl of a wild beast.

I reined up; it was impossible for me to ascertain whether he was warning me of the neighbourhood of danger, or apprising others of my approach; or even, from the nature of his cries, preparing me for an assault by a troop of panthers. Great stakes make man suspicious; and the Prince of Naphtali, speeding to the capture of the principal place of arms of the legions, might be an object well worth a little treachery. I rapidly forgot the beggar's sorrows in the consideration of his habits; decided that his harangue was a piece of professional dexterity, probably played off every week of his life; and that if I would not be in Roman hands before night, I must ride in the precisely opposite direction to that which his signals so laboriously recommended.

Nothing grows with more vigour than the doubt of human honesty. I satisfied myself in a few moments that I was a dupe; dashed through thicket, over rock, forded torrent, and, from the top of an acclivity at which even my

high-mettled steed had looked with repugnance, saw, with the triumph of him who deceives the deceiver, the increased violence of the impostor's attitudes. He leaped from crag to crag with the activity of a goat; and when he could do nothing else, gave the last evidence of Oriental vexation, by tearing his robes. I waved my hand to him in contemptuous farewell; and dismounting, for the side of the hill was almost precipitous, led my panting Arab through beds of myrtle, and every lovely and sweet-smelling bloom, to the edge of a valley, that seemed made to shut out every disturbance of man.

A circle of low hills, covered to the crown with foliage, surrounded a deep space of velvet turf, kept green as the emerald by the flow of rivulets, and the moisture of a pellucid lake in the centre, tinged with every colour of the heavens. The beauty of this sylvan spot was enhanced by the luxuriant profusion of almond, orange, and other trees, that in every stage of production, from the bud to the fruit, covered the little knolls below, and formed a broad belt round the lake.

Parched as I was by the intolerable heat, this secluded haunt of the very spirit of freshness looked doubly lovely. My eyes, half blinded by the glare of the sands, and even my mind exhausted by the perplexities of the day, found delicious relaxation in the verdure and dewy breath of the silent valley. My barb, with the quick sense of animals accustomed to the travel of the wilderness, showed her delight by playful boundings, the prouder arching of her neck, and the brighter glancing of her bright eye.

"Here," thought I, as I led her slowly towards the steep descent, "would be the very spot for the innocence that had not tried the world, or the philosophy that had tried it, and found all vanity. Who could dream that, within the borders of this distracted land, in the very hearing, almost within the very sight of the last miseries that man can inflict on man, there was a retreat, which the foot of man perhaps never yet defiled; and in which the calamities that afflict society might be as little felt as if it were among the stars!"

A violent plunge of the barb put an end to

my speculation. She exhibited the wildest signs of terror, snorted, and strove to break from me; then fixing her glance keenly on the thickets below, shook in every limb. But the scene was tranquillity itself; the chameleon lay basking in the sun, and the only sound was that of the wild doves murmuring under the broad leaves of the palm-trees.

But my mare still resisted every effort to lead her downwards, her ears were fluttering convulsively, her eyes were starting from their sockets; I grew peevish at the animal's unusual obstinacy, and was about to let her suffer thirst for the day, when my senses were paralyzed by a tremendous roar. A lion stood on the summit which I had but just quitted. He was not a dozen yards above my head, and his first spring must have carried me to the bottom of the precipice. The barb burst away at once. I drew the only weapon I had, a dagger,—and, hopeless as escape was, grasping the tangled weeds to sustain my footing, awaited the plunge. But the lordly savage probably disdained so ignoble a prey, and continued on the summit,

lashing his sides with his tail, and tearing up the ground. He at length stopped suddenly, listened, as to some approaching foot, and then with a hideous yell, sprang over me, and was in the thicket below at a single bound.

The whole thicket was instantly alive; the shade which I had fixed on for the seat of unearthly tranquillity, was an old haunt of lions, and the mighty herd were now roused from their noon-day slumbers. Nothing could be grander or more terrible than this disturbed majesty of the forest kings. In every variety of savage passion, from terror to fury, they plunged, and tore, and yelled; darted through the lake, burst through the thicket, rushed up the hills, or stood baying and roaring in defiance against the coming invader; the numbers were immense, for the rareness of shade and water had gathered them from every quarter of the desert.

While I stood clinging to my perilous hold, and fearful of attracting their gaze by the slightest movement, the source of the commotion appeared, in the shape of a Roman soldier issuing, spear in hand, through a ravine at the

further side of the valley. He was palpably unconscious of the formidable place into which he was entering; and the gallant clamour of voices through the hills, showed that he was followed by others as bold and unconscious of their danger as himself.

But his career soon closed; his horse's feet had scarcely touched the turf, when a lion was fixed with fangs and claws on the creature's loins. The rider uttered a cry of horror, and for the instant sat, helplessly gazing at the open jaws behind him. I saw the lion gathering up his flanks for a second bound, but the soldier, a figure of gigantic strength, grasping the nostrils of the monster with one hand, and, with the other shortening his spear, drove the steel at one resistless thrust into the lion's forehead. Horse, lion, and rider fell, and continued struggling together.

In the next moment, a mass of cavalry came thundering down the ravine. They had broken off from their march, through the accident of rousing a straggling lion, and followed him in the giddy ardour of the chase. The sight now

before them was enough to appal the boldest intrepidity. The valley was filled with the vast herd; retreat was impossible, for the troopers came still pouring in by the only pass, and, from the sudden descent of the glen, horse and man were rolled head foremost among the lions; neither man nor monster could retreat. The conflict was horrible; the heavy spears of the legionaries plunged through bone and brain; the lions, made more furious by wounds, sprang upon the powerful horses and tore them to the ground, or flew at the troopers' throats, and crushed and dragged away cuirass and buckler. The valley was a struggling heap of human and savage battle; man, lion, and charger, writhing and rolling in agonies, till their forms were undistinguishable. The groans and cries of the legionaries, the screams of the mangled horses, and the roars and howlings of the lions bleeding with sword and spear, tearing the dead, darting up the sides of the hills in terror, and rushing down again with the fresh thirst of gore, baffled all conception of fury and horror.

But man was the conqueror at last; the sa-

vages, scared by the spear, and thinned in their numbers, made a rush in one body towards the ravine, overthrew every thing in their way, and burst from the valley, awaking the desert for many a league with their roar.

The troopers bitterly repenting their rash exploit, gathered up the remnants of their dead on litters of boughs, and, leaving many a gallant steed to feast the vultures, slowly retired from the place of carnage.

The spot to which I clung, made ascent or descent equally difficult; and during this extraordinary contest I continued imbedded in the foliage, and glad to escape the eye of man and brute alike. But the troop were gone, beneath me lay nothing but a scene of blood, and I began to wind my way to the summit. A menace from below stopped me. A solitary horseman had galloped back to give a last look to this valley of death; he saw me climbing the hill, saw that I was not a Roman, and, in the irritation of the hour, made no scruple of sacrificing a native to the manes of his comrades. The spear followed his words, and ploughed the

ground at my side. His outcry brought back a dozen of his squadron, I found myself about to be assailed by a general discharge, escape on foot was impossible, and I had no resource but to descend and give myself up to the soldiery.

It was to warn me of this hazard that the signals of my strange companion were made. He saw the advance of the Roman column along the plain. My suspicions of his honesty drove me directly into their road, and the chance of turning down the valley scarcely retarded the capture. On my first emerging from the hills I must have been taken. However, my captors were in unusual ill-temper. As an Arab, too poor to be worth plundering or being made prisoner, I should have met only a sneer or an execration, and been turned loose; but the late disaster made the turban and alhaick odious, and I was treated with the wrath due to a fellow-conspirator of the lions.

To my request, that I should be suffered to depart in peace on my business, the most prompt denial was given; the story that I told

to account for my travel in the track of the column, was treated with the simplest scorn, I was pronounced a spy, and fairly told, that my head was my own only till I gave the Procurator whatever information it contained.

Yet I found one friend in this evil state of my expedition. My barb, which I had given up for lost in the desert, or torn by the wild beasts, appeared on the heights overhanging our march, and by snuffing the wind, and bounding backwards and forwards through the thickets, attracted general attention. I claimed her, and the idea that the way-sore and rough-clothed prisoner could be the master of so noble an animal, raised scorn to its most peremptory pitch. In turn I demanded permission to prove my right; and called the barb. The creature heard the voice with the most obvious delight, bounded towards me, rubbed her head to my feet, and by every movement of dumb joy showed that she had found her master.

But my requests for dismissal were idle; I talked to the winds; the rear squadrons of the column were in sight; there was no time to be

lost, I was suffered to mount the barb, but her bridle was thrown across the neck of one of the trooper's horses, and I was marched along to death, or a tedious captivity.

My blood boiled, when I thought of what was to be done before the dawn. "What would be expected from me by my people, and how lame and impotent must my excuse fall on the public ear; how miserable a proof had I given of the vigilance and vigour that were to claim the command of armies!" I gnashed my teeth, and writhed in every nerve. My agitation at length caught the eye of a corpulent old captain, whose good-humored visage was coloured by the deepest infusion of the grape. His strong Thracian charger was a moveable magazine of the choicest Falernian; out of every crevice of his packsaddle and accoutrements peeped the head of a flask; and to judge by his frequent recourse to his stores, no man was less inclined to carry his baggage for nothing. Popularity too attended upon the captain, and a group of young patricians attached to the Procurator's court were content

to abate of their rank, and ride along with the old soldier, in consideration of his better knowledge of the grand military science of providing for the road.

In the midst of some camp story, which the majority received with peals of applause, the captain glanced upon me; and, asking "whether I was not ill," held out his flask. I took it; and never did I taste draught so delicious. Thirst and hunger are the true secrets of luxury. I absolutely felt new life rushing into me with the wine.

"There," said the old man, "see how the fellow's eye sparkles. Falernian is the doctor, after all. I have had no other these forty years. For hard knocks, hard watches, and hard weather, there is nothing like the true juice of the vine. Try it again, Arab." I declined the offer in civil terms.

"There," said he, "it has made the man eloquent. By Hercules, it would put a tongue into the dumb animals. I warrant it would make that mare speak. And now that I look at her, she is as prettily made a creature as I

have seen in Syria; her nose would fit in a drinking-cup. What is her price, at a word?"

I answered him, that "she was not to be sold."

"Well, well, say no more about it," replied the jovial old man. "I know you Arabs make as much of a mare as of a child, and I never meddle in family affairs."

A haughty-looking tribune, covered with embroidery, and the other coxcombry of the court soldier, spurred his foaming charger between us, and uttered with a sneer,—"What, captain, by Venus and all the Graces, giving this beggar a lecture in philosophy, or a lesson in politeness? If you will not have the mare, I will. Dismount, slave!"

The officers gathered to the front, to see the progress of the affair. I sat silent.

"Slave! do you hear? Dismount! You will lose nothing, for you will steal another in the first field you come to."

"I know but one race of robbers in Judea," replied I.

The old captain reined up beside me, and

said, in a whisper—" Friend, let him have the mare. He is rich, and will pay you handsomely; and powerful besides; for he is the nephew of the procurator. It will not be wise in you to put him in a passion."

"That fellow shall never have her, though he were to coin these sands into gold," replied I.

"Do you mean to call us robbers?" said the tribune, with a lowering eye.

"Do you mean to stop me on the highway, and take my property from me, and expect that I shall call you anything else?" was the answer.

"Sententious rogues, those Arabs! Every soul of them has a point or a proverb on his tongue;" murmured the captain to the group of young men, who were evidently amused by seeing their unpopular companion entangled with me.

"Slave!" said the tribune, fiercely, "We must have no more of this. You have been found lurking about the camp. Will you be hanged for a spy?"

"A spy!" said I, and the insult probably coloured my cheek. "No; a spy has no business among the Romans."

"So," observed the captain, "the Arab seems to think that our proceedings are in general pretty palpable. Slay, strip, and burn." He turned to the patrician tribune.—"The fellow is not worth our trouble. Shall I let him go about his business?"

"Sir," said the tribune, angrily, "it is your business to command your troop, and be silent." The old man bit his lip, and fell back to the line of his men. My taunter reined up beside me again. "Do you know, robber, that I can order you to be speared on the spot for your lies?"

"No; for I have told you nothing but the truth of both of us. Such an order too would only prove, that men will often bid others do, what they dare not touch with a finger of their own."

The officers, offended at the treatment of their old favourite, burst into a laugh. The coxcomb grew doubly indignant.

"Strip the hound," exclaimed he to the soldiers: "it is money that makes him insolent."

"Nature has done it at least for one of us, without the expense of a mite;" replied I, calmly.

"Off with his turban. Those fellows carry coin in every fold of it."

The officers looked at each other in surprise; the captain hardly suppressed a contemptuous execration between his lips. The very troopers hesitated.

"Soldiers!" said I, in the same unaltered tone, "I have no gold in my turban. An Arab is seldom one of those—the outside of whose head is better worth than the in."

The perfumed and curled locks of the tribune, surmounted by a helmet, sculptured and plumed in the most extravagant style, caught every eye; and the shaft, slight as it was, went home.

"I'll pluck the robber off his horse by the beard;" exclaimed the tribune, spurring his horse upon me, and advancing his hand.

I threw open my robe, grasped my dagger,

and sternly pronounced,—"There is an oath in our line, that the man who touches the beard of an Arab, dies." He was not prepared for the action; hesitated, and finally wheeled from me. The old captain burst out into an involuntary huzza!

"Take the beggar to the camp;" said the tribune, as he rode away. "I hate all scoundrels;" and he glanced round the spectators.

"Then," exclaimed I, after him, as a parting blow, "you have at least one virtue, for you can never be charged with Self-love."

This woman-war made me popular on the spot. The tribune had no sooner turned his horse's head, than the officers clustered together in laughter. Even the iron visages of the troopers relaxed into grim smiles. The old jocular captain was the only one still grave.

"There rides not this day under the canopy of Heaven," murmured he, "a greater puppy than Caius Sempronius Catulus, tribune of the thirteenth legion, by his mother's morals, and the Emperor's taste. Why did not the coxcomb stay at home, and show off his trap-

pings among the supper-eaters of the palatine? He might have powdered his ringlets with gold-dust, washed his lily hands in rose-water, and perfumed his Indian handkerchief with myrrh, as well there as here; for he does nothing else. Except," and he clenched the heavy hilt of his falchion, "insult men, who have seen more battles than he has seen years; who know better service than figuring in ball-rooms, or bowing in courts; and the least drop of whose blood is worth all that will ever run in his effeminate veins. But I have not done with him yet. As for you, friend," said he, "I am sorry to stop you on your way. But as this affair will be magnified by that fool's tongue, you must be brought to the procurator. However, the camp is only a few miles off; you will be asked a few questions, and then left to follow your will." He little dreamed how I recoiled from that interview.

To shorten the time of my delay, the good-natured old man ordered the squadron to mend their pace; and in half an hour, we saw the

noon-encampment of my sworn enemy, lifting its white tops and scarlet flags among the umbrage of a forest, deep in the valley at our feet.

CHAPTER VI.

THE squadron drew up at the entrance of the procurator's tent; and, with a crowd of alarmed peasants captured in the course of the day, I was delivered over to be questioned by this man of terror. The few minutes which passed before I was called to take my turn, were singularly painful. This was not fear; for the instant sentence of the axe would have been almost a relief from the hopeless and fretful thwartings sown so thickly in my path. But to have embarked in a noble enterprise, and to perish, without use; to have arrived almost within sight of the point of my desires, and then, without striking a blow, to be given up to shame, stung me like a serpent.

My heart sprang to my lips, when I heard myself called to the presence of Florus. He was lying upon a couch, with his never-failing cup before him, and turning over some papers, with a shaking hand. Care or conscience had made ravages in him, since I saw him last. He was still the same figure of excess; but his cheek was hollow: the few locks on his head had grown a more snowy white; and the little, pampered hand was thin and yellow as the claw of the vulture that he so much resembled in his soul.

With his head scarcely lifted from the table, and with eyes that seemed more shut than open, he asked, "whence I had come, and whither I was going?" My voice, notwithstanding the attempt to disguise it, struck his acute ear. His native keenness was awake at once. He darted a fiery glance at me, and, striking his hand on the table, exclaimed—"By Hercules, it is the Jew!" My altered costume again perplexed him. Yet," said he in soliloquy, "that fellow went to Nero, and must have been executed. Ho! send in the tribune who

took him." Catulus entered; and his account of me was, luckily, contemptuous in the extreme. I was "a notorious robber, who had stolen a handsome horse, perfectly worthy of the stud of the procurator." I panted with the hope of escape, and was gradually moving to the door. "Stand, slave!" cried Florus: "I have my doubts of you still; and as the public safety admits of no mistake, I have no alternative. Tribune! order in the lictors. He must be scourged to confession." The lictors were summoned; and I was to be torn by Roman torturers.

A tumult arose outside, and a man rushed in with the lictors, exclaiming, "Justice, most mighty Florus. By the majesty of Rome, and the magnanimity of the most illustrious of governors, I call for justice against my plunderer, my undoer, the robber of the son of El Hakim of his most precious treasure."

Florus recognised the clamourer as an old acquaintance, and desired him to state his complaint, and with as much brevity as possible.

"Last night," said the man, "I was the

happy possessor of a mare, fleet as the ostrich, and shapely as the face of beauty. I had intended her as a present for the most illustrious of procurators, the great Florus, whom the gods long preserve. In the hour of my rest, the spoiler came, noiseless as the fall of the turtle's feather, but cruel as the viper's tooth. When I arose, the mare was gone. I was in distraction. I tore my beard; I beat my head upon the ground; I cursed the robber where-ever he went, to the sun-rising or the sun-setting, to the mountains or the valleys. But fortune sits on the banner of my lord the procurator; and I came for hope to his conquering feet. In passing through the camp, what did I see but my treasure—the delight of my eyes, the drier up of my tears! I have come to claim justice, and the restoration of my mare, that I may have the happiness to present her to the most renowned of mankind."

I had been occupied with the thought, whether I should burst through the lictors, or rush on the procurator. But the length and loudness of this outcry engrossed every one. The

orator was my friend, the beggar. He pointed fiercely to me. If looks could kill, he would not have survived the look that I gave the traitor in return.

"There," said Florus, "is your plunderer. Sabat, have you ever seen him before?"

The beggar strode insolently towards me. "Seen him before! aye, a hundred times. What! Ben Ammon, the most notorious thief from the Nile to the Jordan. My lord, every child knows him. Hah, by the gods of my fathers, by my mother's bosom, by shaft and by shield, he has stolen more horses within the last twenty years, than would remount all the cavalry from Beersheba to Damascus! It was but last night that as I was leading my mare, the gem of my eyes, my pearl—"

I now began to perceive the value of my eloquent friend's interposition.

"An Arab horse-thief?—that alters the case," said the procurator. "Ho! did you not say that the mare was intended for me? Lictor, go and bring this wonder to the door."

The voluble son of El Hakim followed the

lictor; and returned, crying out more furiously than before against me. His "pearl, the delight of his eyes, was spoiled—was utterly unmanageable. I had put some of my villainous enchantments upon her; for which I was notorious."

The procurator's curiosity was excited: he rose, and went to take a view of the enchanted animal. I followed; and certainly nothing could be more singular than the restiveness which the son of El Hakim contrived to make her exhibit. She plunged—she bounded; bit, reared, and flung out in all directions. Every attempt to lead or mount her was foiled in the most complete, yet most ludicrous manner. The young cavalry officers came from all sides; and could not be restrained from boisterous laughter, even by the presence of the procurator. Florus himself, at last, became among the loudest. Even I, accustomed as I was to daring horsemanship, was surprised at the eccentric agility of this unlucky rider. He was alternately on the animal's back and under her feet; he sprang upon her from behind; he sprang over her head;

he stood upon the saddle; but all in vain: he had scarcely touched her, when she threw him up in the air again, amid the perpetual roar of the soldiery.

At length, with a look of dire disappointment, he gave up the task; and, scarcely able to drag his limbs along, prostrated himself before Florus, praying that he would order the Arab thief to unsay the spells that had turned "the gentlest mare in the world into a wild beast." The consent was given with a haughty nod; and I advanced to play my part in a performance, of whose objects I had not a conception. The orator delivered the barb to me with a look so expressive of cunning, sport, and triumph, that, perplexed as I was, I could not avoid a smile. My experiment was rapidly made. The mare knew me, and was tractable at once. This only confirmed the charge of my necromancy. But the son of El Hakim professed himself altogether dissatisfied with so expeditious a process, and demanded that I should go through the regular steps of the art. In the midst of the

fiercest reprobation of my unhallowed dealings, a whisper from him put me in possession of his mind.

I now went through the process used by the travelling jugglers; and if the deepest attention of an audience could reward my talents, mine received unexampled reward. My gazings on the sky, whisperings in the barb's ear, grotesque figures traced on the sand, wild gestures and mysterious jargon, thoroughly absorbed the intellects of the honest legionaries. If I had been content with fame, I might have spread my reputation through the Roman camps, as a conjuror of the first magnitude.

I was, however, beginning to be weary of my exhibition, and longed for the signal; when Sabat approached, and loudly testifying that I had clearly performed my task, threw the bridle over the animal's head, and whispered, "Now!"

My heart panted; my hand was on the mane: I glanced round to see that all was safe before I gave the spring—when Florus screamed out, "The Jew! by Tartarus, it is the Jew himself.

The tribune now broke into the circle, and, with a look of supreme scorn, affectedly exclaimed, "Come, knight of the desert, sovereign of the sands, let us have a specimen of your calling. Stand back, officers; this egg of Ishmael is to quit plunder so soon, that he would probably like to die as he lived—in the exercise of his trade. Here, slave, show us the most approved method of getting possession of another man's horse."

I stood in indignant silence. The tribune threatened. A thought struck me: I bowed to the command, let the barb loose, and proceeded according to my theory of horse-stealing.

I approached noiselessly, gesticulated, made mystic movements, and gibbered witchcraft as before. The animal, with natural docility, suffered my experiments. I continued urging her towards the thinner side of the circle. "Now, noble Romans," said I, "look carefully to the next spell, for it is the triumph of the art."

Curiosity was in every countenance. I made a genuflexion to the four points of the compass,

devoted a gesture of peculiar solemnity to the procurator's tent, and while all eyes were drawn in that direction, sprang on the barb's back, and was gone like an arrow.

I heard a clamour of surprise, mingled with outrageous laughter, and, looking round, saw the whole crowd of the loose riders of the encampment in full pursuit up the hill. Florus was at his tent door, pointing towards me with furious gestures. The trumpets were calling, the cavalry mounting: I had roused the whole activity of the little army.

The slope of the valley was long and steep; and the heavy horsemanship of the legionaries, who were perhaps not very anxious for my capture, soon threw them out. A little knot of the more zealous alone kept up a pursuit, from which I had no fears. An abrupt rock in the middle of the ascent at length hid them from me. To gain a last view of the camp, I doubled round the rock, and saw, a few yards below me, the tribune, with his horse completely blown. I owed him a debt, partly on my own account, and partly on that of the old captain, which I

had determined to discharge at the earliest possible time. I darted upon him. He was all astonishment: a single buffet from my naked hand knocked the helpless taunter off his charger. "Tribune," cried I, as he lay upon the ground, "you have had one specimen of my art to-day, now you shall have another. Learn in future to respect an Arab." I caught his horse's bridle, gave the animal a lash, and we bounded away together. The scene was visible to the whole camp; the troopers, who had reined up on the declivity, gave a roar of merriment, and I heard the old corpulent captain's laugh above it all.

CHAPTER VII.

I HAD escaped; but the delay was ruinous. The sun sank when I reached the brow of the mountain, and Masada lay many a weary mile forward. I cast off the tribune's horse, thus giving his insolent master evidence that I did not understand the main point of my trade, and stood pondering to what point of the mighty ridge that rose blue along the horizon, I should turn; when, in the plunge of the horse, as he felt himself at liberty, his saddle came to the ground. The possibility of its containing reports of the state of the enemy led me to examine its pockets; they were stuffed with letters worthy of the highest circles of Italian

high life; the ill-spelled registers of vapidity at a loss how to lose its time; of libertinism sick of indulgence; and of pecuniary embarrassment driven to the most hopeless and whimsical resources.

A glance at a few of these epistles was enough, and I scattered into the air the reputations of half the high-born maids and matrons of Rome. But, as I was turning away with an instinctive exclamation of scorn at this compendium of patrician life, my eye was caught by a letter addressed to the governor of Masada. In opening it, I committed no violation of diplomacy; for it held no secret, other than an angry remission of his allegiance by some wearied fair one, who announced her intended marriage with the tribune.

My revenge was thus to go further than my intent; for I deprived him of the personal triumph of delivering this calamitous despatch to his rival. Yet, on second thoughts, conceiving that some Cipher might lurk under its absurdity, I secured the paper, and giving the rein, left the whole secret correspondence of

debt, libel, and love, to the delight of mankind.

I flew along; my indefatigable barb, as if she felt her master's anxieties, put forth double speed. But I had yet a fearful length to traverse. The night fell thick and rude; but I had no time to think of rest or shelter. I pushed on. The wind rose, and wrapt me in whirls of sand. I heard the roar of waters. The ground became fractured, and full of the loose fragments that fall from rocky hills. I discovered only that I was at the foot of the ridge, and had lost my way. In this embarrassment I trusted to the sagacity of my steed. But thirst led her directly to the bed of one of the mountain torrents, and the phosphoric gleam of the waters alone saved us both from a plunge over a precipice deep enough to extinguish every appetite and ambition in the round of this bustling world.

To find a passage or an escape I alighted. The torrent bellowed before me. A wall of rock rose on the opposite side. After long climbings and descents, I found that I had descended

too deep to return. Oh, how I longed for trace of man, for the feeblest light that ever twinkled from cottage window! I felt the plague of helplessness. To attempt the waters, was impossible. To linger where I stood till dawn, was misery.

"What would be going on in the mean while? Perhaps, at the very time while I was standing in wretched doubt, imprisoned among those pestilent cliffs, shivering with the spray and the storm, and yet more chilled with bitter incertitude, the deed was doing! Constantius was with ineffectual gallantry assaulting the fortress; my brave kinsmen were pouring out their lives under the Roman spears; and I was not there!"

A fitful sound came mingling with the roar of the cataract; it swelled, and vanished away, like the rushings of the gale. A trumpet rang, but so feebly, that nothing but the keenness of an ear straining to catch the slightest sound, could have distinguished it. I heard remote shouts; they deepened; the echo of trumpets followed. "The assault had begun! The work of glory

and of death was doing. Every instant cost a life. The hail-stones that bruised me were not thicker than the arrows that were then smiting down my people. Yet there was I, held like a wolf in the pitfall!"

Even where the combat was being fought, baffled my conception. It might be in the clouds, or under ground, on the opposite side of the black ridge before me, or many a league beyond the reach of my exhausted limbs and drooping steed; all was darkness to the eye and the mind.

A light flashed down a ravine, leading into the heart of the mountains: another and another rose. Masada stood upon the mountain's brow!

I plunged into the torrent—was beaten down by the billows—was swept along through narrow necks of rock, and, half suffocated, was hurled up again, to find myself on the opposite shore. Wet and weary, I less climbed than tore my way upwards. But the torrent had borne me far below the ravine. Before me was a gigantic rampart of rock. But the time was flying. I sprang with fierce agility from fissure to fissure,

I dragged myself up the face of the precipice by the tufted weeds and chance brushwood. I swung from point to point by the few projecting branches, that yet broke away almost in my grasp; until, with my hands excoriated, my limbs stiff and bleeding, and my head reeling, I reached the pinnacle.

Was I under the dominion of a spell? was the power of some fiend raised to mock me? All was darkness as far as the eye could pierce: the heaviest veil of midnight hung upon the earth. There was utter silence. Not the slightest breath touched upon the ear.

For a while the thought of some strange illusion was paramount; then came the frightful idea that the illusion was in myself; that in the effort to gain the ascent, I had strained eye and ear, until I could neither hear nor see; that I was still within sight and sound of battle, but insensible to the impressions of the external world for ever. Immortality under this exclusion! A deathlessness of the deaf and blind! The thought struck me with a force inconceivable by all minds but one sentenced like mine!

I cried aloud. A flood of joy rushed into my heart when I heard my voice answered; though it was but by the neigh of my barb below, which probably felt itself as ill-placed as its master. I now used my ear as the guide, and cautiously descending the further side of the ridge, was soon on comparatively level ground, the remnant of a forest. My foot struck against a human body; I spoke; the answer was a groan, and an entreaty that I should bear a small packet, which was put into my hands with a feeble pressure, to "the prince of Naphtali!" In alarm and astonishment, I raised the sufferer from the thorns in which he could scarcely breathe; gave him some water from my flask, and after many an effort, in which I thought that life would depart every moment, he told me that "he was the unfortunate leader of the assault of Masada." Constantius lay in my arms!

"Where I am," said he, "how I came here, or any thing, but that we are undone, I cannot conceive. My last recollection was that of fixing a ladder to the inner rampart. We had

made our way good so far without much loss. The garrison was weakened by detachments sent out to plunder for the arrival of the procurator. I attacked at midnight. To surprise a Roman fortress was, I well knew, next to impossible; and no man ever found a Roman garrison without bravery. But our bold fellows did wonders. Every thing was driven from the first rampart; we made more prisoners than we knew what to do with; and in the midst of all kinds of resistance, we laid the ladders to the second wall. But the garrison were still too strong for us. Our easy conquest of the first line might have been a snare, for the battlements before us exhibited an overwhelming force. We fought on; but the ladders were broken with showers of stones from the engines. The business looked desperate; but I had made up my mind not to go back after having once got in; and, rallying the men, carried a ladder through a storm of lances and arrows to the foot of the main tower. I was bravely followed, and we were within grasp of the battlement, when I saw a cohort rush out from a sally-port

below. This was fatal; the foot of the rampart was cleared at once; the ladders were flung down; and I suppose, it is owing to the ill-judged fidelity of some of my followers, that I am unfortunate enough to find myself here and alive."

During the endless hours of this miserable night, I laboured, with scarcely a hope, to keep life in my heroic son. My coming had saved him. The exposure and his wounds must have destroyed him before morning. We consulted sadly on our next course. I suggested the possibility of gaining the fortress by a renewal of the attack, while the garrison were unprepared, or perhaps indulging themselves in carousal or sleep after their success. The necessity of some attempt was strongly in my mind, and I expressed my determination to run the hazard, if I could find where the remnant of our troop had taken refuge. But this was the first difficulty. Signals of any kind must rouse the vigilance of the Romans. The fortress was above our heads; and to collect the men during the night was impossible.

While I watched the restless tossings of

Constantius, a light stole along the ground at a distance. My first idea was, that a Roman patrol was coming, to extinguish our last remains of hope. But the light was soon perceived to be in the hand of some one cautious of discovery. To keep its bearer at a distance, I followed the track, and grasped him.

"I surrender," said the captive, perfectly at his ease; "Long life to the Emperor!" He lifted the lamp to my face, and burst into laughter. "May I have a Roman falchion through me," said he, "but I think we were born under the same planet. By all the food that has entered my lips this day, I took your Highness for a thief; and pardon the word, for a Roman one. I have been running after you the whole day and night." He continued to talk and writhe with a kind of mad merriment. I could not obtain an answer to my questions, of what led him there—how he could guide us out of the forest—or what news he brought from the procurator. He less walked than danced before me through the thickets, as our scene with Florus recurred to his fantastic mind.

"Never was trick so capital as your escape,"

exclaimed he; "I would have given an eye, or an arm, things rather an impediment to a beggar, I allow; but it would have been worth a kingdom to see, as I saw, the faces of the whole camp, procurator, officers, troopers, and all, down to the horse-boys, on your slipping through their fingers in such first-rate style. I have done clever things in my time. But never, no never, shall I equal that way of making five thousand men at once look like five thousand fools. I own I thought that you would do something brilliant; and it was for that purpose that I tried to draw off the eye of that scoundrel Florus, for, sot as he is, there are not ten in Palestine keener in all points where roguery is concerned. I caught hold of his robe, told him a ready lie of the largest size about a discovery of money in Jerusalem; and while he was nibbling at the bait, I heard the uproar. You were off; I could not help laughing in his illustrious face. He kicked me from him, and foaming with rage, ordered every man and horse out after your Highness. But I saw at a glance, that you had the game in your own

hands. You skimmed away like a bird; an eagle could not have got up that long hill in finer condition. Away you went, bounding from steep to steep like a stone from a sling; you cut the air like a shaft. I have seen many a mare in my time; but as for the equal of yours,—why, a pair of wings would be of no use to her. She is a paragon, a bird of paradise, an ostrich on four legs, a ——"

I checked his volubility, and led him to the rough bed-side of Constantius. I could not have found a better auxiliary. He knew every application used by the medicine of the time; and, to give him credit on his own showing, all diseases found in him an enemy worth all the doctors of Asia.

"He had travelled for his knowledge; he had fought with death from the Nile to the Ganges, and could swear that the sharks and crocodiles owed him a grudge throughout the world. He had cured rajahs and satraps, till he made himself unpopular in every court where men looked to vacancies; had kept rich old men out of their graves, until there was a

general conspiracy of heirs to drive him out of the country; and had poured life into so many dying husbands, that the women made a universal combination against his own."

This flow of panegyric, however, did not impede his present services. He applied his herbs and bandages with professional dexterity, and kindling a fire, prepared some food which went further to cheer the patient than even his medicine. He still talked away, like one to whom words were a necessary escape for his surcharge of animal spirits. "He knew every thing in physic. He had studied in Egypt, and could compound the true essential extract of mummy with any man that wore a beard, from the Cataracts to the bottom of the Delta. He once walked to the mountains of the moon, to learn the secret of powdered chrysolite. On the Himmaleh he picked up his knowledge of the bezoar; and a year's march through sands and snows, rewarded him at once with a bag of the ginseng, most marvellous of roots, and the sight of the wall of China, most endless of walls."

How he stooped to veil this accumulation of knowledge in rags, he did not condescend to explain. But his skill, so far, was certainly admirable, and my brave Constantius recovered with a suddenness that surprised me. With his strength, his hopes returned.

"Oh," exclaimed he, awaking from a refreshing sleep, "that I were once again at the foot of the rampart, with the ladder in my hand!"

"By my father's beard," replied the leech, "you are much better where you are: for, observe, though I can go further than any doctor between the four rivers, yet I never professed to cure the dead. Take Masada by scale! Ha, ha! take the clouds by scale! You would have found three walls within the one to which they decoyed you. Herod was the prince of builders, and could have built out every thing, but the champion that carries no arms but a scythe, and cares as little for King Herod, as for Sabat the beggar."

"Then you know Masada?" interrupted I eagerly.

"Know it, yes; every loophole, window, door, aye—and stocks, from one end of it to the other."

But my escape from the camp was so congenial to his ideas of pleasantry, that it mingled with all his topics. War and politics went for nothing, compared with the adroitness of eluding Roman activity. "By Jove!" said he, "when I played my tricks with that pearl of pearls, that supreme of horseflesh, your barb, I was clumsy; I played the clown, you beat me hollow; it was matchless; it was my purse in prospect of your generosity to its emptiness this night;" he made a profound obeisance,—"to see those panting fellows climbing up the hill after you, nearly killed me."

"But the fortress."

"Why, as to the fortress, the notion of attacking it was madness. I had my doubts of your intention; and broke loose from the camp to give you the benefit of my advice.—But the tribune; Ha, ha! never was coxcomb so rightly served. You won the heart of the whole legion

by the single blow that saved him the trouble of sitting his horse. The troopers could not keep their saddles for laughing; and as for the old fat captain, I was only afraid that he would roar himself out of the world. I confess, I owed my escape partly to him, and his last words were, 'Rascal, if you ever fall in with the Arab, whom I suspect to be as pleasant a rogue as yourself, tell him that I wish I had a dozen such in my squadron.' "

" But is there any possibility of knowing the present state of the garrison?"

" Aye, there is the misfortune. Yesterday I could have got in, and got out again, like a wild cat. But after this night's visit, it is not too much to suppose, that they may be a little more select in their hospitality. The governor had a slight correspondence of his own to carry on; a trifle in the way of trade; I had the honour to be smuggler extraordinary to his Mightiness; and, as in state secrets every thing ought to be kept from the vulgar, my path in and out was by a portcullis, far enough from gates

and sentinels; through which portcullis I should have shown you the way, if the attack had waited for me a few hours longer. That chance is of course cut off now. But see, yonder comes the morning."

"Then we must move, or have the garrison on us."

"I forbid that manœuvre," interrupted the fellow with easy audacity.

Constantius and I, in equal surprise, bade him be silent. Yet the quietness with which he took the rebuke propitiated me, and I asked his reason.

"Nothing more than, that, if you stir, you are ruined. The hare is safest near the kennel. The outlaw sleeps sounder in the magistrate's house, than he ever slept in his den. I once escaped hanging, by coolly walking into a jail. There stands Masada!" and he pointed to what looked to me a heap of black clouds gathered on the mountain's brow above.

"Not a soul that you have left alive there, will dream of your being within a stone's throw.

The copse is thick enough to hide a man from every thing, but a creditor, an evil conscience, or a wife; stir out of it, and they are on your heels. And I dislike them so heartily, that I hope never to have the honour of their attendance. But you are not mad enough to think of trying them again?"

"Mad, fellow!" I exclaimed; "you forget in whose presence you are." He continued making some new arrangement of the bandages on his patient's wounds; and, without taking the slightest notice of my displeasure, cheered his work with a song.

"Mad or wise," said I in soliloquy, "I shall lie in the ditch of that fortress, or in its citadel, before next sun-rise."

"You may lie in both," said the beggar, pursuing his occupation and his song. "Mad! why not; all the world are in the same way. The Emperor is mad enough to stay where men have hands and knives. His people are mad enough to let their throats be cut by him. Florus is mad enough to sleep another night in

Palestine. You are mad enough to attack his garrison; and I—am mad enough to go along with you."

"You are a singular being. But will you hazard your neck for nothing?"

"Custom makes every thing easy," observed he, spanning his muscular neck with his hand. "I have been so many years within sight of the cord, and all such expeditious modes of paying the only debt I ever intend to pay, and that only because it is the last, that I care as little about the venture, as any broken gambler about his last coin. The tables are ready, dice in hand, the stakes down; and before the next sun peeps in upon our play, we three shall have our fortunes made, or shall lie without caring a straw for the spite of fortune. My plan is this; I must get into the town, you must gather your troop without noise, and be ready for my signal, a light from one of the towers. A false attack must be made on the gates, a true attack must be made by the portcullis, which, if it be not stopped up, I will unlock; and never trust me, if your Highness does not

eat your next supper off the governor's plate. There's a plan for you. I should have been a general. But merit,—aye, there's the rub,—merit is like the camel's lading, it stops him at the gate, while the empty slip in. It is putting wings upon one's shoulders, when the race is to be run upon the ground. Too much brain in a man is like too much bend in a bow; the bow either breaks, or sends the arrow a mile beyond the mark. Genius, my prince, is—"

I interrupted the general in his progress into the philosopher, and demanded whether the renewed vigilance of the fortress would not require some additional expedient for his entry. He struck his forehead; the thought came, as the flint gives its spark, and he produced a highly ornamented tablet. "This," said he, "I ought to employ in your service; for if you had not knocked down the tribune, I could never have picked it up. In making my run over the mountain, I struck upon his correspondence. Oh! the curse of curiosity! if I had not stopped to delight myself with the whole scandal of Rome, I should have been

here in time. But I lingered, lost an hour in laughing, and when I set out in the dusk, lost my way, for the first time in my life. Before setting off, however, I wrote a letter ridiculing Florus in all points, burlesqueing the people about him, scoffing at every body in the most heroic style; and having subscribed the name of the unlucky tribune, addressed it to one of the most notorious personages in all Italy; and placed it where it is sure to be seen, and as sure to be carried to the most noble of procurators.——Now, could I not begin a correspondence with the governor, and act the courier myself? Yet, to hit upon the subject—" He paused.

The letter that I had found, occurred to me. I showed it to our adroit friend. He was in ecstacies. He kissed it over and over, and played some of those antics which had already made me half doubt his sanity. He flung down the tablet. "Go," said he, "fiction is a fine thing in its way. But give me fact, when I want to entrap a great man. He is so little used to truth, that the least atom of it is a

spell; the fresh bait will carry the largest hook. Aye, this is the letter for us; it has the sincerity of the sex, when they are determined to jilt a man; its abuse will cover me from top to toe with the cloak of a true ambassador."

"But the unpopularity of your credentials," said I, laughingly.

"Let the potentate by whom they are sent, settle that affair with the potentate by whom they are received," replied he.

"You will be hanged."

"I shall first get in."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE day passed anxiously, for every sound of the huge fortress was heard in the thicket. The creaking of machines, brought up to the walls against future assault; the rattling of hammers; the rolling of waggons loaded with materials for the repair of the night's damage; the calls of trumpet and clarion, and the march of patroles, rang perpetually in our ears. The depth of the copse, and its nearness to the ramparts, justified the beggar's generalship, and the son of El Hakim proved himself a master of the art of castrametation. Nothing could exceed his alertness in threading the mazes of this

dwarf forest, where a wolf could scarcely have made progress; and where a lynx would have required all his eyes.

On my asking, how he contrived to find his way through this labyrinth, he told me, that "for making one's way in woods and elsewhere, there was nothing like a familiarity with smuggling, and the state."

"The man," continued he, "who has driven a trade in every thing from pearls to pistachios without leave of the customs, cannot be much puzzled by thickets; and the man who has contrived to climb into confidence at court, must have had a talent for keeping his feet in the most slippery spots, or he never could have mounted the back-stairs!"

He collected the troop, of whom I was rejoiced to believe that but few had fallen, though nearly one half were made prisoners; they were eager to attempt the rampart again, all boldly attributing their failure to accident, and all thirsting alike for the rescue of their comrades, and for revenge. The letter was

given to our emissary, and I ascended the loftiest of the mountain pinnacles, to examine for myself the nature of the ground.

From my height the view was complete; the whole interior of the fortress lay open; and in the same glance, I saw the grace and regal grandeur of design, which Greek taste could stamp even upon the strength of military architecture, and the utter hopelessness of any direct assault upon Masada, by less than an army.

Who but he that has actually been in the same situation, can conceive the feelings with which I gazed! Below me, was the spot in which a few hours must see me conqueror or nothing! On that battlement I might, before another morn, be stretched in blood! on that tower I might be fixed a horrid spectacle! Nature is irresistible, and her workings overpowered the old belief, that a mysterious sentence was to give me a miserable perpetuity of life. The thought has always terribly returned; but the moment of energy has always extinguished it; the hurrying and swelling current of my heart rolled over it, as the summer

torrent rushes over the tomb on its brink. The melancholy memorial was there, sure to re-appear with the first subsiding; but, lost while the flood of feeling whirled along.

Every group of soldiery that slept, or sang, or gamed, or gazed, along the ramparts under the bright and quiet day which followed so fearful a night; every archer pacing on his tower; every solitary wanderer in the streets; every change of the guard; every entering courier; was visible to me, and all were objects of keen interest. At length, my courier came. I saw his approach from a pass of the mountains at the remotest point from our cover, his well-contrived exhaustion, the ostentatious dust upon his tattered habiliments, and the fearless impudence with which he beguiled the sulky guard at the gate, and stalked before the centurion by whom he was brought to the Governor.

With what eyes of impatience I now watched the sun! I wished for the power of extinguishing day from the heavens. As the hour of fate approached, the fever of the mind grew. To defer the attack beyond the night, was to aban-

don it; for by morn the troops under Florus must reach Masada. Yet a strange sensation, a chillness of heart sometimes came on me, in which my hands were as feeble as an infant's. I felt like one before a tribunal, awaiting the word that must decide his destiny. Nothing tries the soul more deeply than this concentration of its fortunes into a few moments. The man sees himself standing on the edge of a precipice, down which there is no second step. But the thought of returning errandless and humiliated, and this too, from my first enterprise, was intense bitterness. I made my decision. From that instant I breathed freely, my strength returned, hope glowed in my bosom; and, clinging to the granite spire of the mountain, I looked down upon the haughty strong-hold, like its evil genius descending from the clouds.

The sun touched the western ridge. A horseman came at full stretch across the plain at its foot, and entered the fortress. He evidently brought news of importance, for the troops were hurried under arms, flags hoisted on the ram-

parts, and the walls lined with archers. All was military bustle.

My first conception was, that my emissary had betrayed us, and that we were about to be attacked. I plunged from the pinnacle, and was following the windings of the goat-track to our lair, when I saw the rising of a cloud of dust in the distance. It moved with great rapidity, and soon developed its contents. Intelligence of the assault had reached Florus. His sagacity saw what perils turned on the loss of the fortress; he shook off his indolence, and came without delay to its succour. Banners, helmets, and scarlet cloaks, poured across the plain. A torrent of brass, burning and flashing in the sun-beam, continued to roll down the defile; and before the evening star glittered, the whole cavalry of the fifteenth legion was trampling over the drawbridge of Masada.

Here was the death-blow. My enterprise was henceforth tenfold more hopeless; but with me the time for prudence was past. If the reinforcement had arrived but an hour before,

I should probably have given up the attempt in despair. But my mind was fixed, I had made an internal vow; and if the whole host of Rome were crowded within the walls beneath, I should have hazarded the assault.

I descended, found my troop collected, and, to my alarm and vexation, Constantius, enfeebled as he was, obstinately determined to assault the rampart again. With the noble daring of his enthusiastic heart he told me, that unless I suffered him to attempt the retrieval of his defeat, he felt it impossible to survive.

"Shame and grief," said he, "are as deadly as the sword; and never will I return to the face of her whom I love, nor of the family whom I honour, unless I can return with the consciousness of having at least deserved to be successful."

Against this I reasoned, but reasoned in vain. We finally divided our followers. I gave him the attack of the rampart, which was to be the place of his triumph or his grave; flung myself into his embrace, and listened to his parting

steps, with a heart throbbing at every tread. I then moved round the foot of the mountain towards the secret passage.

The night fell dark as we could wish. I waited impatiently for the signal, a light from the walls. Yet, no signal twinkled from wall or tower, and I began to distrust again; but while I lingered, a shout told me that Constantius was already engaged. "Let what will come," exclaimed I, "Onward."

We scrambled up the face of the rock, and at length found the entrance of the subterranean. It was so narrow, that even in the daytime it must have been nearly invisible from below. A low iron door a few yards within the fissure was the first obstacle. To beat it down might alarm the garrison. The passage allowed but of our advance one by one. I led the way, hatchet in hand. A few blows given with as little noise as possible, broke the stones round the lock. The door gave way, and we all crept in. In this manner we wound along for a distance, which I began to think endless. The passage was singularly toilsome. We

ascended considerable heights, we descended steep paths, in which it was with the utmost difficulty that we could keep our feet; we heard the rush of waters through the darkness; blasts of bitter wind swept against us; the thick and heavy air that closed round us after them, almost impeded our breathing, and from time to time the vapour of sulphur gave the fearful impression that we had lost our way, and were actually engulfed in the bowels of a burning mine.

The heart of my hunters was bold, and they still held on; but the mere fatigue of struggling through this poisoned atmosphere, was fast exhausting their courage. I cheered them with what topics I could, but never was my imagination more barren. I heard, at every step I took, fewer feet following me. The close and pestilental air was beginning to act even upon myself; but the great stake was playing above, and onward I must go. I dared not speak louder than in a whisper; soon no whisper responded to mine. I tottered on, till, overpowered by the feeling that our sacrifice was in

vain, a sensation like that of a sickly propensity to sleep bound up my faculties; and, whether I slept or fainted, I for a time lost all recollection.

A roar, like thunder, overhead, roused me. A sight the most superb burst on my awaking eyes; a roof of gold, arched so high, that even its splendour was partially dimmed; walls of diamond, pillared with a thousand columns of every precious gem; whole shafts of emerald; pavilions of jasper and beryl; couches wrought with pearl and silver; a floor, as far as the glance could pierce, studded with amethyst and ruby; treasures, to which the accumulated spoils of the Greek or the Persian were nothing; the finest devices of the most exquisite art, mingled with the most colossal forms which wealth could wear; opulence in its massive and negligent grandeur; opulence in its delicate, and almost spiritualized beauty, were before me. A slender flame burning at the foot of an idol, lighted up this stupendous temple.

I was alone; but the orifice by which I had entered was visible; the light shot far down

into it, and I soon collected the greater number of my troop. All were equally wrapt in wonder, and the superstitious feelings which the presence of the Roman and Syrian idolaters had partially generated even in the Jewish mind, began to startle those brave men.

"We had, perhaps, come into forbidden ground; the gods of the earth, whether gods or demons, were powerful; and we stood in the violated centre of the mountain."

For the first time, I found the failure of my influence. A few adhered to me, but the majority calmly declared that, however fearless of man, they dared go no further. I threw myself on the ground before the entrance of the cavern, and desired them to consummate their crime by trampling on their prince and leader. But they were determined to retire. I taunted them, I adjured them, I poured out the most vehement reproaches. They stepped over me as I lay at the mouth of the fissure; and at length one and all left me to cry out in my dazzling solitude, against the treachery of human faith, and the emptiness of human wishes.

The roar again rolled above; I heard distant shouts and trumpets. In the sudden and desperate consciousness that all was now to be gained or lost, I rushed after the fugitives, to force them back. I plunged into the darkness, and grasped the first figure that I could overtake. My hand fell on the iron cuirass of a Roman! my blood ran chill. "We were betrayed; decoyed into the bowels of the mountain to be massacred."

The figure started from me. I gave a blind blow of the axe, and heard it crush through his helmet. The man fell at my feet. I wildly demanded "How he came there, and how we might make our way into the light?"

"You are undone," said he faintly. "Your spy was seized by the Procurator. Your attack was known, and the door of the subterranean left unguarded, to entrap you. This passage was the entrance to a former mine; and in the mine is your grave." The voice sank, he groaned, and was no more.

His words were soon confirmed by the hurried return of my men. They had found the

passage obstructed by a portcullis, dropt since their entrance. Torches were seen through the fissures above, and the sound of arms rattled round us. The ambush was complete. "Now," said I, "we have but one thing for it;—the sword, first for our enemy, last for ourselves. If we must die, let us not die by Roman halters."

One and all, we rushed back into the mine. But we had now no leisure to look upon the beauty of those spars and crystals, which under the light of the altar glittered and blushed with such gem-like radiance. From that altar rose a fierce and broad pyramid of fire; piles of fagots, continually poured from a grating above, fed the blaze to intolerable fierceness. Smoke filled the mine. To escape was beyond hope. The single orifice had been already tried. Around us was a solid wall as old as the world. It was already heating with the blaze; our feet shrank from the floor. The flame, shooting in a thousand spires, coiled and sprang against the roof, the walls, and the

ground. To remain where we were, was to be a cinder. The catastrophe was inevitable!

In the madness of pain, I made a furious bound into the column of fire. All followed, for death was certain, and the sooner it came the better. With unspeakable feelings I saw, at the back of the mound of stone on which the fagots burned, an opening, hitherto concealed by the huge figure of the idol. We crowded into it; here we were at least out of reach of the flame. But what was our chance, but that of a more lingering death? We hurried in; a portcullis stood across the passage! What was to be our fate, but famine? We must perish in a lingering misery—of all miseries the most appalling; and with the bitter aggravation of perishing unknown, worthless, useless, stigmatised for slaves or dastards! What man of Israel would ever hear of our deaths? What chronicler of Rome would deign to vindicate our absence from the combat?

We were within hearing of that combat. The assault thundered more wildly than ever

over our heads ; the alternate shout of Jew and Roman descended to us. But where were we? caged, dungeoned, doomed! If the earth laid her treasures at my feet that night, I would have given them for one hour of freedom, one saving, hallowed effort. Oh! for one struggle beside my warriors, to redeem my name, and avenge my country. The contrast subdued me utterly. I sank into a corner, and wept like a child.

The roar of battle grew feeble. "Was all lost? Constantius slain? for with life he would not yield. Was the whole hope of Judea crushed at a blow?" I cried aloud to my followers to force the portcullis. They dragged and tore at the bars. But it was of a solid strength, that not ten times ours could master.

In the midst of our hopeless labours, the sound of heavy blows above caught my ear, and fragments of rock fell in; the blows were continued. Was this but a new expedient to crush or suffocate us?

A crevice showed the light of a torch overhead. I grasped the axe to strike a last blow at the gate, and die.—I heard a voice pro-

nounce my name! Another blow opened the roof. A face bent down, and a loud laugh proclaimed my crazy friend. "Ha!" said he, "are you there at last? You have had a hard night's work of it. But, come up; I have an incomparable joke to tell you about the tribune and the procurator. Come up, my prince, and see the world."

I had no time to rebuke his jocularity. I climbed up the side of the passage, and found myself still in a dungeon. To my look of disappointment, he gave no other answer than a laugh; and unscrewing a bar from the loop-hole above his head, "It is my custom," said he, "to make myself at my ease, wherever I go; and as prisons fall to a man's lot, like other things, I like to be able to leave my mansion whenever I am tired of it."

"Forward then," said I, impatiently.

"Backward," said the beggar, with the most unruffled coolness. "That loop-hole is for me alone. I may be under the governor's care again, and I have showed it to you now, merely as a curiosity. Drink, my brave fellows," said

he, turning to the troop below, and giving them a skin of wine. "Soldiers must have their comforts, my gallant prince," as well as beggars. If that villain Procurator had not come by express, (for no man alive is quicker to catch an idea, where he is likely to lose or gain,) you should have been by this time sleeping in the governor's bed, and the governor, probably, supping with me. But all is fortune, good and bad, in this world. The Procurator, putting your escape and mine together, began to think that his presence might be useful here; and the laziest rogue in Palestine came with a speed that might have done honour to the quickest, who stands before you in my person. I had gone on swimmingly with the governor on the strength of your love-letter, angry as it made him. But the first sight of Florus put an end to my chance of opening the gates for your triumphal entry. I was tied, neck and heels, and flung here, to be gibbeted to-morrow morning. But that morning has not come yet."

He paced the cell uneasily. At length he

sprang up, and looking from the loop-hole, whispered " Now !"—A low, creaking sound of machinery followed. " Down into the cavern," said he, " that accursed cohort has moved at last. Away, my prince, and seek your fortune."

I exhibited some reluctance to be engulfed again. But his countenance assumed a sudden sternness. His only word was " Down !" As we were parting, he solemnly pronounced,— " May whatever power befriends the righteous cause, and blasts the man of infamy and blood, send the lightnings before you !" A tear stood in his uplifted eye. His worn countenance flushed, as he spoke the words. He seized a spear from a corner, and plunged after me into the cavern.

The portcullis no longer obstructed us; the passage opened at the foot of the rampart. My heart bounded; I could have rushed upon an army. The same eagerness was in us all. But the hand of our guide was on my shoulder. " Your attack," said he, " can be nothing, unless it be a surprise. Move along unseen, if possible, till you come to the flank of the first

tower. There wait for my signal!" I demanded its nature. But he was gone.

The sound of the assault swelled again, though it was palpably receding. I climbed the rampart alone. The torches on a distant battlement showed me the Romans in force, and evidently making way. I could restrain myself no longer. My troop too murmured at their inaction. I gave the word—led them on—concealed by the shadow of the colossal wall, saw the Romans crowding on the battlements above, fell upon the guard at the gate, and cast it open!

Constantius was the first that saw me. He sprang forward, with a cry of exultation. The Romans on the battlement felt themselves cut off, were struck with panic, and threw down their arms; but we had more important objects, and rushed back to the citadel. Our work was not yet done; we were entangled in the streets, and lost time. The garrison was strong, and fought like men who had no resource but in the sword. We were pressed on all sides; an arrow lodged in my shoulder, and I could wield

the axe no more. In a few discharges, every man round me was bruised or bleeding. I saw a Roman column hurrying along the rampart, whose charge must finish the battle at once. But in the instant of despair, a blaze sprang up in rear of the enemy. Another and another followed. The governor's palace was on fire! The sight broke the Roman courage. Cries of treachery rang through the ranks; they turned, flung away spear and shield, and I was master of the strongest fortress in Palestine!

CHAPTER IX.

RESISTANCE was at an end, and we had now nothing to do, but to prevent the conflagration from snatching the prize out of our hands. The flames rose menacingly from the roof of the palace; and another hour might see the famous arsenal beyond the power of man. Leaving to Constantius the care of securing the prisoners, I entered the palace, followed by a detachment. In the bustle, I had missed my deliverer; but scarcely could think about him, or any thing else, while the enemy were showering lances and shafts as thick as snow upon us. But now, some fears of his extravagance recurred to me,

and I ordered strict search to be made for him.

The fire had seized on but a wing of the palace, and was speedily extinguished. I was ascending the stair, when a figure bounded full against me from a side-door. It was the beggar. His voice, however, was my only means of recognition, for his outward man had undergone a total change. He wore a rich cuirass and helmet, a Greek falchion glittered in his embroidered belt, a tissued mantle hung over his shoulder, and a spear ponderous, but inlaid and polished with the nicest art, was brandished in his hand. "What," said he, "is all over? May all the fogs of earth and skies cloud me, but I was born under the most malignant planet that ever did mischief; I left you only to do some business of my own, I failed there. My next business was to join and help you to give a lesson to those Roman hounds: or, if they were to give the lesson to us, take chance along with you, and exhibit as a soldier. I made bold to borrow the governor's arms, as you see; but I am always unlucky."

"If it was you who set this roof on fire, your torch was worth an army."

"Aye, I never saw fire fail; no man is ashamed of running away from a blaze; and I thought that the Romans were tired enough, to be glad of the excuse. But I had a point besides to carry. Florus is somewhere under these ceilings. I determined to burn him out, and pay home my long arrear, as he attempted to make his escape. But you have just extinguished the cleverest earthly contrivance for the discovery of rascal governors; and I must break an oath I made long ago against his ever dying in his bed."

"Florus here! then we must have him without delay. But, who comes?"

At the word I seized a slave of the palace, in the attempt to escape. He begged hard for life, and promised to conduct us where the Procurator was concealed. We hurried on through a succession of winding passages; a strong door stopped us: "There," said the slave.

"By the beard of my fathers, the wolf shall

not be long in his den," cried the son of El Hakim. "Procurator, your last crime is committed."

He threw himself against the door with prodigious force; the bars burst away, and before us lay the terror of Judea!

He was to be a terror no more. A cup, the inseparable amethystine cup, stood on the table beside his couch. He lay writhing with pain. His countenance wore the ghastliest hue of death. I bade him surrender. He smiled, took the cup in his trembling hand, and eagerly swallowed the remaining drops in its bottom.

"What; poison!" exclaimed my companion. "Has the villain escaped me! Here is my planet again; never was man so unlucky. But, he is not dead yet."

He drew his falchion, and lifted it up with the look of one about to offer a solemn sacrifice. I seized his arm. "He is dying," said I; "he is beyond earthly vengeance." The wretched criminal before us was nearly insensible to his brief preservation. The poison, acting upon a frame already broken with public and private

anxieties, was making quick work; and the glazed eye, the fallen countenance, and the collapsed limb, showed that his last hour was come.

"And this is the thing," soliloquized the son of El Hakim, "that men feared! In this senseless flesh was the power to make the free tremble for their freedom, and the slave curse the hour that he was born. This mass of mortality could stand between me and happiness—could make me a beggar, a wanderer, miserable, mad!" He caught up the hand that hung nerveless from the couch. "Accursed hand!" exclaimed he, "what torrents of blood have owed their flowing to thee! A word written by these fingers cost a thousand lives. And, oh! Heaven! in this cruel grasp was the key to thy dungeon, my Mary; that dungeon of more than the body, the hideous prison-house that extinguished thy mind!" He let fall the hand, and wept bitterly.

To my utter surprise, the Procurator started upon his feet, and, with the look that had so often made the heart quake, haughtily demanded, who

we were, and how we dared to interrupt his privacy. I felt as if a spirit had started up before me from the shroud. But this extraordinary revival was merely the last effort of a fierce mind. He tottered, and was falling, when my companion darted forward, grasped him by the bosom with one hand, and waving the falchion above him with the other—"He hears! he sees!" exclaimed he exultingly. "Who are we? Who am I? Look upon me, Gessius Florus, before the sight leaves your eyes for ever. See Sabat the Ishmaelite—the despised, the insulted, the trampled, the undone. But never did you prosper from the hour of my ruin. I was your spy, but it was only to bring you into a snare; I fed your pride, but it was only that it might turn the hearts of all men against you; I stimulated your avarice, only that wealth might make your nights sleepless, and your days, days of fear; I stirred your wrath into rage; I set your prudence asleep; I inflamed your ambition into frenzy! This night I led your conquerors upon you. But I had made all sure. The vengeance was at hand. In

another week, Gessius Florus, if you had escaped this sword, you would have been seized by order of the Emperor; stripped of your wealth, your honours, your accursed power, and your wretched life. The command for your blood is this night crossing the Mediterranean!"

The dying man struggled to get free, wrenched himself by a violent effort from the strong grasp, that at once held and sustained him, and fell.—He was dead!

The son of El Hakim stood gazing on the body in silence; when the glitter of a ring on the hand, as it lay spread on the floor, struck his eye. He seized it with an outcry: the man was wholly changed; his frowning visage flashed with joy. I in vain demanded the cause. He pressed the signet to his lips. "Farewell, farewell!" he exclaimed.

"Will you not wait for your share of the spoil, your ample and deserved reward?"

"Farewell!" he repeated, and burst from the chamber.

This memorable night made changes in more than the Ishmaelite. Constantius was, at last, in

his element. I had hitherto seen him disguised by circumstances: the fugitive from his country, the lover under the embarrassments of forbidden passion, the ill-starred soldier. His native vigour of soul was under a perpetual cloud. But now the cloud broke away; and victory, the consciousness of having nobly retrieved his check, and the still prouder consciousness of the career that this triumph laid open before him, brought the character of his mind into full light. He was now the lofty enthusiast that nature made him. He breathed generous ambition: his step was the step of command; and when he rushed to my embrace with almost the eagerness of a boy, and a voice stifled with emotion, I saw in him the romance, the soaring spirit, and the passionate love of glory, that moulded the Greek hero.

He had done his duty nobly. All were in admiration of his assault. The Romans had been fully prepared. He scaled the rampart, and scaled it almost singly in their teeth. His men followed gallantly. He pressed on: the second rampart was stormed. I found him at the foot of the third,

checked by its impregnable mass alone, but defying the whole garrison to drive him back. When I afterwards saw the strength of those bulwarks, I felt that, with such a leader, at the head of troops animated by his own spirit, there was nothing extravagant in the boldest hope of war.

This was an eventful night; and there was still much to be done before we slept. I threw over my tattered garments one of the many mantles that lay loose round the chamber, flung another on the body of the Procurator, and sallied forth to give the final orders of the night. The prisoners had been already secured, and I found the great hall of the palace crowded with their officers. The interview was whimsical: for a while I escaped recognition; the gashed faces and torn raiment of my hunters, which bore the marks of our dreary march through the subterranean; the rough heads and hands stained with the fight, a startling contrast to the perfect equipment of the Roman under all circumstances, gave them the look of the wildest of the robber tribes. My disguise was

in the contrary way, yet complete. The cloak was accidentally one of the most showy in the Procurator's wardrobe. I found myself enveloped in furs and tissues; and their Arab acquaintance was forgotten, in what seemed to them the legitimate monarch of the mountains.

I was received by the circle of officers with the deference which, let the captor be who he may, marks the distinction between him and his prisoner; yet with the decent dignity of the brave. There was but one exception, which I might have guessed—the tribune. He was all humiliation, stooped to make some abject request about his baubles, and was probably on the point of apologizing for his ever having taken up the trade of war; when I turned on my heel, and shook hands with my old friend the Captain. He looked in evident perplexity. At last, through even the grim evidences of the night's work on my countenance, and the problem of my pompous mantle, his brightening eye began to recognize me; and he burst out with, "The Arab, by Jupiter!" But when I asked him, "what had become of his baggage," I touched a tender

string; and, with a countenance as cast down, as if he had sustained an irreparable calamity, he told me, that his whole travelling cellar was in the hands of my men; and it was his full belief, that he was at that moment not worth a flask in the wide world.

The tribune turned away in conscious disgrace; and I sent him to a dungeon, to meditate till morn on the awkwardness of insolence to strangers. With the others I sat down to such entertainment as a sacked fortress could supply; but which hunger, thirst, and fatigue, rendered worth all the banquets of the idle. The old captain cheered his soul, and grew rhetorical. "Wine," said he, flask in hand, "does wonders. It is the true leveller, for it leaves no troublesome inequality of conditions. It is the true sponge, that pays all debts at sight, for it makes us forget the existence of a creditor. It is the true friend, that sticks by a man to the last drop; the faithful mistress, that jilts no man; and the most charming of wives, whose tongue no husband hears, whose company is equally delightful at all hours, and who

is as bewitching this day as she was this day fifty years ago."

The panegyric was popular. The governor's cellar flowed. The Italian connoisseurship in vintages was displayed in the most profound style; and long before we parted, the great "sponge" which wipes away debt, had wiped away every recollection of defeat. The idea of their being prisoners, never clouded a sunbeam that came from the bottle. The letters scattered from the tribune's saddle were an unfailing topic. The legion picked them up on the march; they had the piquancy of scandal of their particular friends; and the addition made to their intelligence by my wild associate, was unanimously declared the most dexterous piece of frolic, the most pleasant venom, and the most venomous pleasantry, that ever emanated from the wit of man.

But my task was not yet done. I left those gay soldiers to their wine; and with Constantius, and some torch-bearers, hastened to the Armoury of Herod—the forbidden ground; the treasure-house of war; and, if old rumour were

to be believed, the place of many a mysterious celebration, unlawful to be seen by human eyes.

The building was in the centre of the citadel, and was of the stateliest architecture. The massive doors were thrown open. At the first step, I shrank from the blaze of steel and gold that shot back against the torches. The walls of this gigantic hall were covered with arms and armour of every nation—cuirasses, Persian, Roman, and Greek; the plate-mail of the Gaul; the Indian chain-armour;—innumerable head-pieces, from the steel cap of the Scythian, to the plumed and triple-crested helmet of the Greek, the richest combination of strength and beauty ever borne by soldiership—shields of every shape and sculpture; the Greek orb; the Persian rhomb; the Cimmerian crescent;—all arms, the ponderous spear of the phalanx; the Thracian pike; the German war-hatchet; the Italian javelin;—the bow, from the Nubian, twice the height of man, to the small half circle of the Assyrian cavalry;—swords, the broad-bladed and fearful falchion of the Roman, every thrust of which let out a life; the huge two-

handed sword of the Baltic tribes; the Syrian scimitar; the Persian acinaces; the deep-hilted knife of the Indian islander; the Arab poniard; the serrated blade of the African; all were there, in their richest models—the collection of Herod's life. War had raised him to a rank, which allowed the indulgence of his most lavish tastes of good and ill; the sword was his true sceptre; and never king bore the sign of his sovereignty more royally emblazoned.

After long admiration of this display of the wealth dearest to the soldier, I was retiring; when a slave approached, and prostrating himself, told me that a hall remained, still more singular, "the hall in which the Great Herod received his death-warning." I gazed round the armoury; there was no door but the one by which we had entered——.

"Not here," said the Ethiopian; "yet it is beside us. The foot of a Roman has never entered it. The secret remained with me alone. Does my lord command that it shall be revealed?"

The order was given. The slave took down

one of the coats of mail, pushed back a valve, and we entered a winding stair which led us downwards for some minutes. The narrow passage and heavy air reminded me of the subterranean. Our torches burned dimly, and the visages of my attendants showed how little their gallantry was to be relied on; if we were to be brought into contact with magicians and ghosts.

"Here," said the Ethiopian, "it was the custom of the great king, in his declining years, when his heart was broken by the loss of the most beloved of his wives, and maddened by the conspiracies of the princes his sons, to come and consult others than the God of Jerusalem. Here the Chaldee men of wisdom came to raise the spirits of the departed, and show the fates of his kingdom. We are now in the bowels of the mountain."

He loosed a chain, which disappeared into the ground with a hollow noise. A huge mass of rock slowly rolled back, and showed a depth of darkness through which our twinkling torches scarcely made way.

"Stop," said the slave, "I should have first lighted the shrine." He left us, and we shortly saw a blaze of many colours on a tripod in the centre. As the blaze strengthened, a scene of wonder awoke before the eye. A host of armed men grew upon the darkness. The immense vault was peopled with groups of warriors, all the great military leaders of the world, in their native arms, and surrounded by a cluster of their captains; the disturbers of the earth, from Sesostris down to Cæsar and Antony, brandishing the lance, or reining the charger, each in his known attitude of command. There rushed Cyrus in the scythed chariot, surrounded by his horsemen, barded from head to heel. There Alexander, with the banner of Macedon waving above his head, and armed as when he leaped into the Granicus. There Hannibal, upon the elephant that he rode at Cannæ. There Cæsar, with the head of Pompey at his feet. Those, and a long succession of the masters of victory, each in the moment of supreme fortune, made the vault a representative palace of human glory. But the view from

the entrance told but half the tale. It was when I advanced and lifted the torch to the countenance of the first group, that the moral was visible. All the visages were those of skeletons. The costly armour was upon bones. The spears and sceptres were brandished by the thin fingers of the grave. The vault was the representative sepulchre of human vanity.

This was one of the fantastic fits of a mind which felt too late the emptiness of earthly honours. Half pagan, the powerful intellect of the man gave way to the sullen superstitions of the murderer. Egypt was still the mystic tyrant of Palestine; and Herod in his despair, sank into the slave of a credulity at once weak and terrible.

In the last hours of a long and deeply varied life, exhausted more by misery of soul than disease; when medicine was hopeless, and he had returned from trying the famous springs of Callirhoë in vain, the king ordered himself to be brought into this vault, and left alone. He remained in it for some hours. The attendants were at length roused by hideous wailings;

they broke open the entrance, and found him in a paroxysm of terror. The vault was filled with the strong odours of some magical preparations still burning on the tripod. The sound of departing feet was heard, but Herod sat alone. In accents of the wildest woe, he declared that he had seen the statues filled with sudden life, and charging him with the death of his wife and children.

He left Masada instantly, pronouncing a curse upon the hour in which he first listened to the arts of Egypt. He was carried to Jericho, and there laid on a bed from which he never rose. Alternate bursts of blasphemy and remorse made his parting moments frightful. But tyranny was in his last thought; and he died holding in his hand the order for the massacre of every leading man in Judea.

CHAPTER X.

THE first decided blow of the war was given. I had incurred the full wrath of Rome; the trench between me and forgiveness was impassable; and I felt a stern delight in the conviction that hope of truce or pardon was at an end: the seizure of Masada was a defiance of the whole power of the empire.

But it had the higher importance of a triumph at the beginning of a war, the moment when even the courageous are perplexed by doubt, and the timid watch their opportunity to raise the cry of ill fortune. It showed the facility of conquest, where men are determined to run the full risk of good or evil; it shook the mili-

tary credit of the enemy, by the proof that they could be over-matched in activity, spirit, and conduct. The capture of a Roman fortress by assault was a thing almost unheard of. But the consummate value of the enterprise was in its declaration to those who would fight; that they had leaders, able and willing to take the last chance with them for the freedom of their country.

When day broke, and the strength of this celebrated fortress was fairly visible, I could scarcely believe that our success was altogether the work of man. The genius of ancient fortification produced nothing more remarkable than Masada. It stood on the summit of a height, so steep that the sun never reached the bottom of the surrounding defiles. Its outer wall was a mile round, with thirty-eight towers, each eighty feet high. Immense marble cisterns; granaries, like palaces, capable of holding provisions for years; exhaustless arms and military engines, in buildings of the finest Greek art; and defences of the most costly skill, at every commanding point of the interior; showed the

kingly magnificence and warlike care of the most brilliant, daring, and successful monarch of Judea, since Solomon.

By the first sun-beam, a new wonder struck the multitude, whom the tumult of the night had gathered on the neighbouring hills. I ordered the great standard of Naphtali to be hoisted on the citadel. It was raised in the midst of shouts and hymns; and the huge scarlet folds spread out, majestically displaying the emblem of our tribe, the Silver Stag, before the morn. Shouts echoed and re-echoed round the horizon. The hill tops, covered as far as the eye could reach, did homage to the banner of Jewish deliverance; and, inspired by the sight, every man of their thousands took sword and spear, and made ready for battle.

My first care was to relieve the mind of my family; and Constantius, with triumph in every feature, and love and honour glowing in his heart, was made the bearer of the glad tidings.

The duties of command devolved rapidly on me. An army to be raised—a plan of operations to be determined on—the chieftains of the country to be combined—and the profligate

feuds of Jerusalem to be extinguished; were difficulties, that lay before my first step. It is in preliminaries like those, that the burning spirit of a man, full of the manliest resolutions, and caring no more for personal safety than he cares for the weed under his feet, is fated to feel the true troubles of high enterprise.

I soon experienced the wretchedness of having to contend with the indolent, the artful, and the base. My mind, eager to follow up the first success, was entangled in tedious and intricate negociation, with men whom no sense of right or wrong could stimulate to integrity. Rival interests to be conciliated—gross corruptions to be crushed—paltry passions to be stigmatised—family hatreds to be reconciled—childish antipathies—grasping avarice—giddy ambition—savage cruelty, to be rectified, propitiated, or punished; were among my tasks, before I could plant a foot in the field. If those are the fruits that grow round even the righteous cause, what must be the rank crop of conspiracy!

But, one point I speedily settled. The first assemblage of the chieftains satisfied me of the

absurdity of councils of war. Every man had his plan; and every plan contemplated some personal object. I saw that to discuss them would be useless and endless. I had already begun to learn the diplomatic art of taking my own way, with the most unruffled aspect. I begged of the proposers to reduce their views to writing; received their papers with perfect civility; took them to my cabinet, and gave their brilliancy to add to the blaze of my fire. High station is soon compelled to dissemble. A month before, I should have spoken out my mind, and treated the plans and the proposers alike with scorn. But a month before, I was neither general nor statesman. Freed from the encumbrance of many councillors, I decided on a rapid march to Jerusalem;—there was power and glory in the word: by this measure I should be master of all that final victory could give, the popular mind, the national resources, and the highest prize of the most successful war.

Those thoughts banished rest from my pillow. I passed day and night in a perpetual, feverish,

exaltation of mind; yet, if I were to compute my few periods of happiness, among them would be the week when I could neither eat, drink, nor sleep, from the mere overflowing of my warlike reveries at Masada.

We may well forgive the splenetic apathy, and sullen scorn of life, that beset the holder of power, when time or chance leaves his grasp empty. The mighty monarch; the general, on whose sword hung the balance of empires; the statesman, on whose council rose or sank the welfare of millions; fallen into inaction, sunk into the feeble and unexciting employments of common life, their genius and their fame a burden and a reproach, the source of a restless and indignant contrast between what they were and what they are; how feeble an emblem of such minds is the lion fanged, or the eagle chained to a log! We may pass by even the fooleries, which so often make the world stare at the latter years of famous men. When they can no longer soar to their natural height, all beneath is equal to them; our petty wisdom is not worth their trouble. They scorn the little opi-

nions of common-place mankind, and follow their own tastes—contemptuously trifle, and proudly play the fool.

Before the week was out, I was at the head of a hundred thousand men; I was the champion of a great country; the leader of the most formidable insurrection that ever contended with Rome in the East, the general of an army whose fidelity and spirit were not to be surpassed on earth. Could ambition ask more! There was even more, though too solemn to be asked by human ambition. My nation was sacred; a cause above human nature was to be fought for; in that cause I might, at once, redeem my own name from obscurity, and be the instrument of exalting the name, authority, and religion of a people, the regal people of the Sovereign of all!

Constantius returned. It was in vain that I had directed my family to take refuge in the mountain country of Naphtali. My authority was for once disputed at home. Strong affection mastered fear, and, swift as love could speed, I saw them entering the gates of Masada.

Such meetings can come but once in a life. I was surrounded by innocent fondness, beauty most admirable, and faith that no misfortunes could shake; and I was surrounded by them in an hour when prosperity seemed labouring to lavish on me all the wishes of man. I felt too, by the glance with which Miriam looked upon her "hero," that I had earned a higher title to the world's respect. Had she found me in chains, she would have shared them without a murmur. But her lofty heart rejoiced to find her husband thus vindicating his claims to the homage of mankind.

Yet to those matchless enjoyments I gave up but one day. By the next dawn, the trumpet sounded for the march. I knew the importance of following up the first blow in all wars; its indispensable importance in a war of insurrection. To meet the disciplined troops of Rome in pitched battles would be madness. The true manœuvre was, to distract their attention by variety of onset, cut off their communications, keep their camps in perpetual alarm, and make our activity, numbers, and knowledge of the

country, the substitutes for equipment, experience, and the science of the soldier.

In summoning those brave men, I adhered to the regulations of the law of our prophet; a law whose humanity and regard for natural feelings, distinguished it in the most striking manner from the stern violences of the pagan levy. No man was required to take up arms, who had built a house and had not dedicated it; no man who had planted a vineyard or olive ground, and had not yet reaped the produce; no man who had betrothed a wife, and had not yet taken her home; and, no man during the first year of his marriage.

My prisoners were my last embarrassment. To leave them to the chance of popular mercy, or to leave them immured in the fortress, would be cruelty. To let them loose, would be, of course, to give so many soldiers to the enemy. I adopted the simpler expedient of marching them to Berytus, seizing a detachment of the Roman provision ships, and embarking the whole for Italy.

To my old friend the captain, whose cheer-

fulness could be abated only by a failure of the vintage, I offered a tranquil settlement among our hills. The etiquette of soldiership was formidably tasked by my offer, for the veteran was thoroughly weary of his thankless service. He hesitated, swore that I deserved to be a Roman, and even a captain of horse; but finished by saying that, bad a trade as the army was, he was too old to learn a better. I gave him and some others their unconditional liberty; and he parted from the Jewish rebel with more obvious regret, than perhaps he ever dreamed himself capable of feeling for any thing but his horse and his bottle.

Eleazar took the charge of my family and the command of Masada. The sun burst out with cheerful omen on the troops, as I wound down the steep road, named the Serpent, from its extreme obliquity. The sight before me was of a nature to exhilarate the heaviest heart; an immense host making the air ring with acclamations at the coming of their chieftain. The mental perspective of public honours and national service, was still more exalting. Yet I

felt a boding depression, as if within those walls had begun and ended my prosperity.

On the first ridge which crossed our march, I instinctively stopped to give a farewell look. The breeze had sunk, and the scarlet banner shook out its folds to the sun no more; a cloud hung on the mountain peak, and covered the fortress with gloom. I turned away. The omen was true!

But sickly thoughts were forgotten, when we were once fairly on the march. Who that has ever moved with an army, has not known its ready cure for heaviness of heart? The sound of the moving multitude, their broad mirth, the mere trampling of their feet, the picturesque lights that fall upon the columns as they pass over the inequalities of the ground, keep the eye and the mind singularly alive.

Our men felt the whole delight of the scene; and gambolled like deer, or horses let loose into pasture. But, to the military habits of Constantius, this rude vigour was the highest vexation. He galloped from flank to flank with hopeless diligence, found that his arrangements

only perplexed our bold peasantry the more, and at length fairly relinquished the idea of gaining any degree of credit by the brilliancy of their discipline. But I, no more a tactician than themselves, was content with seeing in them the material of the true soldier: the spear was carried rudely, but the hand that carried it was strong; the march was irregular, but the step was firm; if there was song, and mirth, and clamour, they were the cheerful voices of the brave; and I could read in the countenances of ranks, that no skill could keep in order, the hardihood and generous devotedness that in wars like ours, have so often baffled the proud, and left of the mighty but clay.

During the day, we saw no enemy; and drove along with the unembarrassed step of men going up to one of the festivals. The march was hot, the zeal of our young soldiers made it rapid, and we continued it long after their usual hour of repose. But then sleep took its thorough revenge. It was fortunate for our fame that the enemy were not nigh; for sleep fastened irresistibly and at once upon the whole

multitude. Sentinels were planted in vain; the spears fell from their hands, and the watchers were tranquilly laid side by side with the slumbering. Outposts and the usual precautionary arrangements were equally useless. Sleep was our master. Constantius exerted his vigilance with fruitless activity; and, before an hour passed, he and I were probably the sole sentinels of the grand army of Judea.

"What can be done with such sluggards?" said he, indignantly pointing to the heaps that, wrapped in their cloaks, covered the fields far round, and in the moonlight looked more like surges tipped with foam, than human beings.

"What can be done?—wonders."

"Will they ever be able to manœuvre in the face of the legions?"

"Never."

"Will they ever be able to move like regular troops?"

"Never."

"Will they ever be able to keep their eyes open after sunset?"

"Never, after such a march as we have given them to-day."

"What then, under heaven, will they be good for?"

"To beat the Romans out of Palestine!"

CHAPTER XI.

BEFORE the sun was up, my peasants were on the march again. From the annual journeys of the tribes to the great city, no country was ever known so well to its whole population as Palestine. Every hill, forest, and mountain stream, was now saluted with a shout of old recognition. Discipline was forgotten, as we approached those spots of memory; and the troops rambled loosely over the ground on which in gentler times they had rested in the midst of their caravans. Constantius had many an irritation to encounter; but I combated his wrath, and pledged myself, that when the occasion arrived, my countrymen would show the native vigour of the soil.

"Let those brave peasants take their way," said I. "If they will not make an army, let them make a mob; let them come into the field with the bold propensities and generous passions of their nature, unchecked by the trammels of regular warfare; let them feel themselves men and not machines, and I pledge myself for their victory."

"They will soon have an opportunity: look yonder." He pointed to a low range of misty hills some miles onward.

"Are we to fight the clouds? for I can see nothing else."

"Our troops, I think, would be exactly the proper antagonists. But there is one cloud upon those hills, that something more than the wind must drive away."

The sun threw a passing gleam upon the heights, and it was returned by the sparkling of spears. The enemy were before us. Constantius galloped with some of our hunters to the front, to observe their position. The trumpets sounded, and my countrymen justified all that I had said, by the enthusiasm that lighted up

every countenance at the hope of coming in contact with the oppressor. We advanced; shouts rang from tribe to tribe; we quickened our pace; at length the whole multitude ran. At the foot of the height every man pushed forward without waiting for his fellow; it was a complete confusion. The chief force against us was cavalry, and I saw them preparing to charge. We must suffer prodigiously, let the day end how it would. The whole campaign might hang on the first repulse. I stood in agony. I saw the squadrons level their lances. I saw the centurions dash out in front. All was ready for the fatal charge. To my astonishment, the whole of the cavalry wheeled round and disappeared.

The panic was like miracle—equally rapid and unaccountable. I rode to the top of the hill, and discovered the secret. Constantius, observing the enemy's attention taken up with my advance, had made his way round the heights. His trumpet gave the first notice of the manœuvre. Their rear was threatened, and the cavalry fled, leaving a cohort in our hands.

The first success in war is as full of consequences as the first repulse. The flight and capture of any fragment of the legions, was magnified into a sign of perpetual triumph. But never was successful soldier honoured with a more clamorous triumph than Constantius. Nature speaks out among her untutored sons. Envy has nothing to do in such fields as ours. He was applauded to the skies.

"Well," said I, as I pressed the gallant hand that had planted the first laurel on our brows; "you see that, if ploughmen and shepherds make rude soldiers, they make capital judges of soldiership. You might have conquered a kingdom without receiving half this panegyric in Rome."

"The service is but begun, and we shall have another lesson to get or give before to-morrow. Those fellows are grateful, I allow," said he, with a smile, "but you must allow that, for what has been done, we have to thank the discipline that brought us in the Roman rear."

"Yes, and the discipline that made them so much alarmed about their rear, as to run

away; when they might have charged and beaten us."

This little affair put us all in spirits, and the songs and cheerful clamours burst out with renewed animation. But the symptoms of the enemy soon became thicker. We found the ruined cottage, the torn-up garden, the burnt orchard; those habitual evidences of the camp. As we advanced, the tracks of waggons and of the huge wheels of the military engines were fresh in the grass, and from time to time some skeleton of a beast of burden, or some half-covered wreck of man, showed that desolation had walked there; the cavalry soon showed themselves on the heights in larger bodies; but all was forgotten in the sight that at length rose upon the horizon; we beheld, bathed in the richest glow of a summer's eve, the summits of the mountains round Jerusalem, and glorious above them, like another sun, the golden beauty of the Temple of temples.

What Jew ever saw that sight but with homage of heart? Fine fancies may declaim of the rapture of returning to one's country after

long years. Rapture! to find ourselves in a land of strangers, ourselves forgotten, our early scenes so changed, that we can scarcely retrace them, filled up with new faces, or with the old so worn by time and care, that we read in them nothing but the emptiness of human hope; the whole world new, frivolous, and contemptuous of our feelings. Where is the mother, the sister, the woman of our heart? we find their only memorials among the dead, and bitterly feel that our true country is the tomb.

But the return to Zion was not of the things of this world. The Jew saw before him the city of prophecy and power. Mortal thoughts, individual sorrows, the melancholy experiences of human life, had no place among the mighty hopes that gathered over it, like angels' wings. Restoration, boundless empire, imperishable glory, were the writing upon its bulwarks. It stood before him the Universal City, whose gates were to be open for the reverence of all time; the symbol to the earth of the returning presence of the Great King; the promise to the Jew of an empire, triumphant over the casual-

ties of nations, the crimes of man, and the all-grasping avarice of the grave.

The multitude prostrated themselves; then rising, broke forth into the glorious hymn sung by the tribes on their journeys to the Temple.

"Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, the mountain of his holiness.

"Beautiful, the joy of the earth is Mount Zion, the city of the Great King!

"God is known in her palaces for a refuge.

"We have thought of thy loving-kindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple.

"Walk about Zion, tell the towers thereof. Mark ye her bulwarks, consider her palaces. For her God is our God, for ever and ever; he will be our guide in death; his praise is to the ends of the earth. Glory to the King of Zion."

The harmony of the adoring myriads rose sweet and solemn upon the air; the sky was a canopy of sapphire; the breeze rich with the evening flowers; Jerusalem before me! I felt as if the covering of my mortal nature were about to be cast away, and my spirit to go forth,

divested of its grosser incumbrances, on a bright and boundless career of fortune.

But recollections never to be subdued, saddened my memory of the Temple; and when the first influence of the worship passed, I turned from the sight of what was to me the eternal monument of the heaviest crime and calamity of man. I gave one parting glance, as day died upon the spires. To my surprise, they were darkened by more than twilight; I glanced again, smoke rolled cloud on cloud over Mount Moriah; flame, and the distant roar of battle startled us—"had the enemy anticipated our march, and was Jerusalem about to be stormed before our eyes!"

We were not long left to conjecture. Crowds of frightened women and children were seen flying across the country. The roar swelled again; we answered it by cries of indignation, and rushed onward. Unable to ascertain the point of attack, I halted the multitude at the entrance of one of the roads ascending to the Great gate of the Upper city, and galloped forward with a few of my people.

A horseman rushed from the gate with a heedless rapidity, which must have flung him into the midst of us, or sent him over the precipice. His voice alone enabled me to recognise in this furious rider my kinsman Jubal. But never had a few months so altered a human being. Instead of the bold and martial figure of the chieftain, I saw an emaciated and exhausted man, apparently in the last stage of life or sorrow: the florid cheek was of the colour of clay; the flashing glance was sunken; the loud and cheerful voice was sepulchral. I welcomed him with the natural regard of our relationship: but his perturbation was fearful; he trembled, grew fiery red, and could return my greeting only with a feeble tongue and a wild eye.

But this was no time for private feelings. I inquired the state of things in Jerusalem. Here his embarrassment was thrown aside, and the natural energy of the man found room. "Jerusalem has three curses at this hour," said he, fiercely, "the priests, the people, and the Romans; and the last is the lightest of the three.—The priests bloated with indulgence,

and mad with love of the world; the people pampered with faction, and mad with bigotry; and the Romans availing themselves of the madness of each, to crush all."

"But has the assault been actually made; or is there force enough within to repel it?" interrupted I.

"The assault has been made, and the enemy have driven every thing before them, so far as has been their pleasure. Why they have not pushed on, is inconceivable; for our regular troops are good for nothing. I have been sent out to raise the villages; but my labour will be useless, for, see, the eagles are already on the wall."

I looked; on the northern quarter of the battlements I saw, through smoke and flame, the accursed standard. Below, rose immense bursts of conflagration; the whole of the New City, the Bezetha, was on fire.

My plan was instantly formed. I divided my force into two bodies; gave one to Constantius, with orders to enter the city, and beat the Romans from the walls; and with the other,

threaded the ravines towards their position on the hills. I had to make a long circuit. The Roman camp was pitched on the ridge of Mount Scopas, seven furlongs from the city. Guided by Jubal, I gained its rear. My troops, stimulated by the sight of the fugitive people, required all my efforts to keep them from rushing on the detachments that we saw successively hurrying to reinforce the assault.

Night fell; but the signal for my attack, a fixed number of torches on the tower of the Temple, did not appear. The troops, ambushed in the olive-groves skirting the ridge, had hitherto escaped discovery. At length they grew furious, and bore me along with them. As we burst up the rugged sides of the hill, like a huge surge before the tempest, I cast a despairing glance towards the City: the torches at that moment rose. Hope lived again. I pointed them out to the troops: the sight added wings to their speed; and, before the enemy could recover from their astonishment, we were in the centre of the camp.

Nothing could be more complete than our

success. The legionaries, sure of the morning's march into Jerusalem, and the plunder of the Temple, were caught leaning in crowds over the ramparts, unarmed, and making absolute holiday. Caius Cestius, their insolent general, was carousing in his tent after the fatigues of the evening. The tribunes followed his example; the soldiery saw nothing to require their superior abstemiousness, and the wine was flowing freely in healths to the next day's rapine, when our roar opened their eyes. To resist was out of the question. Fifty thousand spearmen, as daring as ever lifted weapon, and inflamed with the feelings of their harassed country, were in their midst, and they ran in all directions. I pressed on to the general's tent; but the prize had escaped: he was gone, on the first alarm. My followers indignantly set it on fire: the blaze spread, and the flame of the Roman camp rolled up, like the flame of a sacrifice to the god of battles.

The seizure of the position was the ruin of the detachments abandoned between the hill and the city. At the sight of the flames, the

gates were flung open; and Constantius drove the assailants from point to point, until our shouts told him that we were marching upon their rear. The shock then was final. The cohorts, dispirited and surprised, broke like water; and scarcely a man of them lived to boast of having insulted the walls of Jerusalem.

Day arose; and the Temple met the rising beam, unstained by the smoke of an enemy's fire. The wreck of the legions lay upon the declivities, like the fragments of a fleet on the shore. But this sight, painful even to an enemy, was soon forgotten in the concourse of the rescued citizens, the exultation of the troops, and the still more seducing vanities that filled the heart of their chieftain.

Towards noon, a long train of the principal people, headed by the priests and elders, was seen issuing from the gates to congratulate me. Music and triumphant shouts announced their approach through the valley. My heart bounded with the feelings of a conqueror. The whole long vista of national honours; the popular praise, the personal dignity, the power

of trampling upon the malignant, the clearance of my character, the right to take the future lead on all occasions of public service and princely renown; opened before my dazzled eye.

I was standing alone upon the brow of the promontory. As far as the eye could reach, all was in motion, and all was directed to me: the homage of soldiery, priests, and people, centred in my single being. I involuntarily uttered aloud—"At last, I shall enter Jerusalem in triumph." I heard a voice at my side—"Never shall you enter Jerusalem, but in sorrow!"

An indescribable pang accompanied the words. There was not a living soul near me to have uttered them. The troops were standing at a distance below, and in perfect silence. The words were spoken close to my ear. But I fatally knew the voice, and conjecture was at an end.

My limbs felt powerless, as if I had been struck by lightning. I called Jubal up the peak to assist me. But the blow that smote my frame, seemed to have smote his mind. His

look had grown tenfold more haggard in this single night. His eyes rolled wildly; his speech was a collection of unmeaning sounds, or the language of a fierce disturbance of thought, altogether unintelligible. A lunatic stood before me.

Was this to be the foretaste of my own inflictions! I shuddered as the past horrors rose upon my memory. Or was I to see my kindred, friends, family, put under the yoke of bodily and mental misery, as a menace of the punishment that was to cut asunder my connexion with human nature!

CHAPTER XII.

In pain and terror I drew my unfortunate kinsman from the gaze of the troops; and entreated him to tell me, by what melancholy chance his feelings had been thus disturbed. He looked at me with a fierce glance, and half unsheathed his dagger. But I was not to be repelled; and still laboured to soothe him. He hurriedly grasped the weapon, flung it down the steep, and sinking at my feet, burst into tears.

An uproar in the valley roused me from the contemplation of this wreck of youth and hope. The enemy, though defeated, had suffered little comparative loss. The pride of the legions could not brook the idea of defeat, by what

they deemed the rabble of the city and the fields. Cestius, under cover of the broken country on our flanks, had rallied the fugitives of the camp; and now, between me and the city, were rapidly advancing in columns, forty thousand men.

The manœuvre was bold. It might either cut us off from Jerusalem, and force us to fight at a ruinous disadvantage; or leave the city totally exposed. But, like all daring games, it was perilous; and I was determined to make the haughty Roman feel that he had an antagonist, who would not leave the game at his discretion.

From the pinnacle on which I stood, the whole champaign lay beneath me. Nothing could be lovelier. The grandest combinations of art and nature were before the eye—Jerusalem on her hills, a city of palaces, and in that hour displaying her full pomp: her towers streaming with banners; her battlements crowded with troops; her priesthood and citizens in their festal habits, pouring from the colossal gates, and covering the plain with processions;

That plain itself, coloured and teeming with the richest produce of the earth; groves of the olive; declivities, purple with the vine, or yellow with corn, gleaming in the sun, sheets of vegetable gold, richer than ever was dug from Indian mine.

I gazed, with an eye enraptured by the scene of beauty. But the signals of my advanced parties along the heights, soon told me that the enemy were in movement.

My plan was already adopted. On the right spread the plain; on the left lay the broken and hilly country, through which the enemy were moving by the three principal ravines. I felt that, if they could unite and form, success, with our undisciplined levies, was desperate. The only hope was, of beating the columns separately, as they emerged into the plain. The moment of action was rapidly arriving. Cavalry had begun to scatter over the ground, and ride down upon the processions; which, startled at the sight, were instantly scattered, and flying towards Jerusalem.

"The day of congratulations is clearly over,"

said Jubal, pointing in scorn to the dispersed citizens. "To-day, at least, you will not receive the homage of those hypocrites of the Sanhedrim."

"Nor, perhaps, to-morrow, fellow-soldier, for we must first see of what materials those columns are made. If we beat them, we shall save the elders the trouble of crossing the plain, and receive our honours within the walls."

"In Jerusalem!" exclaimed he, wildly. "No; never! You have dangers to encounter within those walls, that no art of man could withstand; dangers keener than the dagger, more deadly than the aspic, more resistless than the force of armies! Enter Jerusalem, and you are undone."

I looked upon him with astonishment. But there was in his eye a sad humility, a strangely imploring glance, that formed the most singular contrast to the wildness of his words. "Be warned!" said he, pressing close, as if he dreaded that his secret should be overheard. "I have seen horrid things, I have heard horrid things, since I last entered the city. Be-

ware of the leaders of Jerusalem! I tell you that they have fearful power, that their hate is inexorable, and that you are its great victim!"

"This is altogether beyond my conception: how have I offended?"

"I know not; but mysterious things are whispered. You are charged with unutterable acts. Your sudden abandonment of the priesthood: sights seen in your deserted chambers, which not even the most daring would venture to inhabit:—your escape from dangers, that must have extinguished any other human being, have bred fatal rumours. It has been said that you worshipped in the bowels of the mountain of Masada, where the magic fire burns eternally before the form of the Evil One; that you even conquered the fortress, impregnable as it was to man, by a horrid compact; and that the raising of your standard was the declared sign of that compact, dreadfully to be repaid by you and yours!"

"Monstrous and incredible calumny! Where was their evidence? My actions were before the face of the world.—Hypocrites and villains!"

"If your virtues were written in a sun-beam, envy would darken, malice pervert, and hatred destroy;" exclaimed my kinsman, with the bold countenance and manly feeling of his better days. "They have in their secret councils stained you with a fate more gloomy than I can comprehend —— that you are sentenced to even here the misery reserved for the guilty beyond the grave."

I felt as if he had stricken a lance through my heart. Mortal sickness seized on every vein. My blood was ice. Fiery sparkles shot before my eyes. "There," thought I, "is the first infliction of the sentence that is to separate, to smite, to pursue me, to the last hour of time!"

I instinctively put my hand to my brow, to feel if the mark of Cain were not already there. I gave one hurried glance at Heaven, as if to see the form of the destroying angel stooping over me.

But the consciousness that I was in the presence of the multitude, compelled me to master my feelings. I assumed a desperate firmness,

and commanded Jubal to be ready with his proofs of those calumnies, against the time when I should confound my accusers. But I spoke to the winds. I need have dreaded no observer in him. The interval of reason was gone. He burst out into the fiercest horrors.

"They pursue me!" exclaimed he; "they come by thousands, with the poniard and the poison! they cry for blood! they would drive me to a crime black as their own!"

He flung himself at my feet; and clasping them, prevented every effort to save him from this degradation. He buried his face in my robe; and casting up a scared look from time to time, as if he shrank from some object of terror, apostrophised his vision.

"Fearful being," he cried, "spare me; turn away those searching eyes, I have sworn to do the deed, and it shall be done. I have sworn it against faith and honour, against the ties of nature, against the laws of Heaven; but it shall be done. Now, begone! See!" he cowered, pointing to a cloud that floated across the sun; "see, he spreads his wings,

he hovers over me; the thunders are flaming in his hands. Begone, Spirit of power and evil! It shall be done! Look, where he vanishes into the heights of his kingdom! the prince of the power of the air."

The cloud which fed the fancy of my unfortunate kinsman dissolved, and with it his fear of the tempter. But he lay exhausted at my feet,—his eyes closed, his limbs shuddering,—the emblem of weakness and despair. I tried to rouse him by that topic which would once have shot new life into his heroic heart.

"Rise, Jubal; and see the enemy, whom we have so long thirsted to meet. This battle must not be fought without you. To-day, neither magic nor chance shall be imputed to the conqueror, if I shall conquer. Jerusalem sees the battle: and before the face of my country I will show the faculties that make the leader, or will leave the last drop of my blood upon those fields."

The warrior kindled within him. He sprang from the ground, and shot down an eagle glance at the enemy, who had made rapid progress,

and were beginning to show the heads of their columns in the plain. He was unarmed; I gave him my sword; and the proud humility with which he put it to his lips, was a pledge to me that it would be honoured in his hands.

"Glorious thing!" he exclaimed, as he flashed it before the sun, "that raises man at once to the height of human honours, or sends him where no care can disturb his rest; thou art the true sceptre that guards and graces empire; the true talisman, more powerful than all the arts of the enchanter! What, like thee, can lift up the lowly, enrich the destitute, restore the undone! What talent, consummate knowledge, gift of nature, nay, what smile of fortune can, like thee, in one hour bid the obscure stand forth the idol of a people, or the wonder of a world! Now, for glory!" he shouted to the listening circle of the troops, who answered him with shouts.—"Now, for glory!" they cried, and poured after him down the side of the mountain.

The three gorges of the valleys through which the enemy moved, opened into the plain

at wide intervals from each other. I delayed our march until the moment at which the nearest column should show its head. I saw that the eagerness of Cestius to reach the open ground was already hurrying his columns; and that, from the comparative facilities of the ravine immediately under my position, the nearest column must arrive unsupported.

The moment came. The helmets and spears were already pouring from the pass, when a gesture of my hand let loose the whole human torrent upon them. Our advantage of the ground, our numbers, and impetuosity, decided the fate of this division at once. The legionaries were not merely repulsed, they were absolutely trampled down; they lay as if a mighty wall, or a fragment of the mountain, had fallen upon them.

The two remaining columns were still to be fought. Their solid front, the compact and broad mass of iron that rushed down the ravines, seemed irresistible; and when I cast a glance on the irregular and waving lines be-

hind me, I felt the whole peril of the day. Yet I feared idly. The enemy charged, and forced their way into the very centre of the multitude, like two vast wedges crushing all before them. But though they could repel, they could not conquer. The spirit of the Jew fighting before Jerusalem was more than heroism. To extinguish a Roman, though at the instant loss of life; to disable a single spear, though by receiving it in his bosom; to encumber with his corpse the steps of the adversary, was reward enough for the man of Israel.

I saw crowds of those bold peasants fling themselves on the ground, to creep in between the feet of the legionaries, and die stabbing them; others casting away the lance to seize the Roman bucklers, and encumber them with the strong grasp of death: crowds mounted the rising grounds, and leaped down on the spears.

The enemy, overborne with the weight of the multitude, at length found it impossible to move further: yet their solid strength was not to be broken. Wherever we turned, there was the

same wall of shields, the same thick fence of levelled lances. We might as well have assaulted a rock. Our arrows rebounded from their impenetrable armour; the stones that poured on them from innumerable slings, rolled off like the hail of a summer shower from a roof. But, to have stopped the columns, and prevented their junction, was itself a triumph. I felt that thus we had scarcely to do more, than fix them where they stood, and leave the intense heat of the day, thirst, and weariness, to fight our battle. But my troops were not to be restrained. They still rolled in furious heaps against the living fortification. Every broken lance in that impenetrable barrier, every pierced helmet was a trophy; the fall of a single legionary roused a shout of exultation, and was the signal for a new charge.

But the battle was no longer to be left to our unassisted efforts. The troops in Jerusalem moved down, with Constantius at their head. In the perpetual roar of the conflict, their shouts escaped my ear; and my first intelli-

gence of their advance was from Jubal, who had well redeemed his pledge during the day. Hurrying with him to one of the eminences that overlooked the field, I saw with pride and delight the standard of Naphtali speading its red folds at the head of the advancing multitude. "Who commands them?" asked Jubal eagerly.

"Who should command them, with that banner at their head," replied I, "but my son, my brave Constantius?"

He heard no more; but, bending his turban to the saddle bow, struck the spur into his horse, and, with a cry of madness, plunged into the centre of the nearest column. The stroke came upon it like a thunderbolt; the phalanx wavered for the first time; a space was broken in its ranks. The chasm was filled up by a charge of my hunters. To save or die with Jubal, was the impulse! That charge was never recovered; the column loosened, the multitude pressed in upon it, and Constantius arrived only in time to see the remnant of the

proud Roman army flying to the disastrous shelter of the ravine.

The day was won — I was a conqueror! The invincible legions were invincible no more. I had conquered under the gaze of Jerusalem! Where was the enmity that would dare to murmur against me now! What calumny would not be crushed by the force of national gratitude! A flood of absorbing sensations filled my soul. No eloquence of man could express the glowing and superb consciousness that swelled my heart, in the moment when I saw the Romans shake, and heard the shouts of my army proclaiming me victor!

After that day, I can forgive the boldest extravagance of the boldest passion for war. That passion is not cruelty, nor the thirst of possession, nor the longing for supremacy; but something made up of them all, and yet superior to all—the essential spirit of the stirring motives of the human mind—the fever of the gamester, kindled by the loftiest objects, and ennobled by them——a game where the stake is an endless inheritance of renown, a

sudden lifting of the man into the rank of those on whose names time can make no impression; who, let their place on earth be what it may, are at the head of mankind. Immortals, without undergoing the penalty of the grave!

CHAPTER XIII.

I DETERMINED to give the enemy no respite, and ordered the ravines to be attacked by fresh troops. While they were advancing, I galloped in search of Jubal over the ground of the last charge. He was not to be seen among the living or the dead.

The look of the field, when the first glow of battle passed, was enough to shake a sterner spirit than mine. Our advance to the gorges of the mountain, had left the plain naked. The sea of turbans and lances was gone rolling, like the swell of an angry ocean, against the foot of the hills. All before us was the precipitous rock, or the rocky pass, thronged with

helmets and spears. But all behind was death, or misery worse than death; hundreds and thousands groaning in agony, crying out for water to cool their burning lips, imploring the sword to put them out of pain. The legionaries lay in their ranks, as they had fought; solid piles of men, horses, and arms, the true monuments of soldiership. The veterans of Rome had gallantly sustained the honours of her name.

I turned from this sight towards the rescued city. The sun was resting on its towers; the smokes of the evening sacrifice were ascending in slow wreaths from the altar of the sanctuary. The trumpets and voices of the minstrels poured a rich stream of harmony on the cool air. The recollection of gentler times came upon my heart. Through what scenes of anxious feeling had I not passed, since those gates closed upon me!

The contrast between the holy calm of my early days, and the fierce struggles of my doomed existence, pressed with bitter force. My spirit shook. The warrior enthusiasm was

chilled. The sounds of triumph rang hollow in my ear; and those who had at that hour looked upon the man of victory, the champion of Israel, would have seen but a helpless wretch, hiding his face from human view; and wishing that he could exchange fates with the mangled shapes beside him.

The trampling of horses roused me from this unwarlike weakness. Constantius came glowing to communicate the intelligence, that the last of the enemy had been driven in, and that his fresh troops only awaited my orders to force the passes. I mounted, heard the shouts of the brave pursuers, and was again the soldier.

But the iron front of the enemy resisted our boldest attempts to force the ravines. The hills were not to be turned; and we were compelled, after innumerable efforts, to wait for the movement of the Romans from a spot which thirst and hunger must soon make untenable. This day stripped them of their baggage, beasts of burden, and military engines. Night fell too speedily—to us a reluctant relaxation, to them a temporary shelter from inevitable ruin.

At dawn, the pursuit began again. We found the passes open, and the enemy struggling to escape out of those fatal defiles. The day was worn away in perpetual attempts to break the ranks of the legionaries. The Jew, light, agile, and with nothing to carry but his spear, was a tremendous antagonist to the Roman, perplexed among rocks and torrents, famishing, and encumbered with an oppressive weight of armour. The losses of this day were dreadful. Our darts commanded their march from the heights; every stone did execution among ranks, whose helmets and shields were now shattered by the perpetual discharge. Still they toiled on unbroken. We saw their long line struggling with patient discipline through the rugged depth below; and in the face of our attacks they made way, till night again covered them.

I spent that night on horseback. Fatigue was never felt in the strong excitement of the time. I saw multitudes sink at my horse's feet in sleep as insensible as the rock on which they lay. Sleep never touched my eyelids. I gal-

loped from post to post, brought up reinforcements to my wearied ranks, and longed for morn.

It came at last; the enemy had reached the head of the defiles, but a force was poured upon them that nothing could resist; their remaining cavalry were driven from the sides of the precipice into the depths, the few light troops that scaled the higher grounds were swept away. I looked upon their whole army as in my hands, and was riding forward with Constantius and my chief officers to receive their surrender; when they were saved by one of those instances of devotedness, that distinguished the Roman character.

Wearied of perpetual pursuit and evasion, I was rejoiced to see, at last, symptoms of a determination to wait for us, and try the chance of battle. An abrupt ridge of rock surmounted with a lofty cone was the enemy's position, long after famous in Jewish annals. A line of spearsmen were drawn up on the ridge; and the broken summit of the cone, a space of a few hundred yards, was occupied by a cohort.

Some of the Italian dexterity was employed to give the idea, that Cestius had taken his stand upon this central spot; an eagle, and a concourse of officers were exhibited; and upon this spot I directed the principal attack to be made.

But the cool bravery of its defenders was not to be shaken. After a long waste of time in efforts to scale the rock; indignant at seeing victory retarded by such an obstacle, I left the business to the slingers and archers; and ordered a perpetual discharge to be kept up on the cohort. This was decisive. Every stone and arrow told upon the little force crowded together on the naked height. Shield and helmet sank one by one under the mere weight of missiles. Their circle rapidly diminished, and, refusing surrender, they perished to a man.

When we took possession, the enemy were gone. The resistance of the cohort had given them time to escape. And Cestius sheltered his degraded laurels behind the ramparts of Bethhoron, by the sacrifice of four hundred heroes.

This battle, which commenced on the eighth day of the month Marchesvan, had no equal in the war. The loss to the Romans was unparalleled since the defeat of Crassus. Two legions were destroyed; six thousand bodies were left on the field. The whole preparation for the siege of Jerusalem fell into our hands. Then was the hour to have struck the final blow for freedom. Then was given that chance of restoration, that respite, which Providence gives to every nation and every man. But our crimes, our wild feuds, the bigoted fury, and polluted license of our factions, rose up as a cloud between us and the light; we were made to be ruined.

But those were not my reflections when I saw the gates of Bethhoron closing on the fugitives: I vowed never to rest, until I brought prisoners to Jerusalem, the last of the sacrilegious army that had dared to assault the Temple.

The walls of Bethhoron, manned only with the wreck of the troops that we had routed from all their positions, could offer no impedi-

ment to hands and hearts like ours. I ordered an immediate assault. The resistance was desperate, for beyond this city there was no place of refuge nearer than Antipatris. We were twice repulsed. I headed the third attack myself. The dead filled up the ditch, and I had already arrived at the foot of the rampart, with the scaling ladder in my hand, when I heard Jubal's voice behind me. He was leaping and dancing in the attitudes of utter madness. But there was no time to be lost. I rushed upon the battlements, tore a standard from its bearer, and waved it over my head with a shout of victory. The plain, the hills, the valleys, covered with the host rushing to the assault, echoed the cry; I was at the summit of fortune!

In the next moment I felt a sudden shock. Darkness covered my eyes, and I plunged headlong.

I awoke in a dungeon.

CHAPTER XIV.

In that dungeon I lay two years. How I lived, how I bore to retain existence, I can now have no conception. I was for the greater part of the time in a kind of childishness. I was not mad, nor altogether insensible of things about me, nor even without the occasional inclination for the common objects and propensities of our being. I used to look for the glimmer of day-light, that was suffered to enter my cell. The reflection of the moon in a pool, of which, by climbing to the loop-hole, I could gain a glimpse, was waited for with some feeble

feeling of pleasure. But my animal appetites were more fully alive than ever. An hour's delay of the miserable provision that was thrown through my bars, made me wretched. I devoured it like a wild beast, and then longed through the dreary hours for its coming again.

I made no attempt to escape. I dragged myself once to the entrance of the dungeon, found it secured by an iron door, and never tried it again. If every bar had been open, I scarcely know, whether I should have attempted to pass it. Even in my more reasoning hours, I felt no desire to move; Destiny was upon me. My doom was marked in characters, which nothing but blindness could fail to read; and to struggle with fate, what was it but to prepare for new misfortune!

The memory of my wife and children sometimes broke through the icy apathy with which I laboured to incrust my mind. Tears flowed, nature stung my heart, I groaned, and made the vault ring with the cries of the exile from earth and heaven. But this passed away, and

I was again the self-divorced man, without a tie to bind him to transitory things.

I heard the thunder, and the winds; the lightnings sometimes startled me from my savage sleep. But what were they to me! I was dreadfully secure from the fiercest rage of nature. There were nights when I conceived that I could distinguish the roarings of the ocean, and, shuddering, seemed to hear the cries of drowning men. But those too passed away. I swept remembrance from my mind, and felt a sort of vague enjoyment in the effort to defy the last power of evil. Cold, heat, hunger, waking, sleep, were the calendar of my year, the only points in which I was sensible of existence; I felt myself like some of those torpid animals which, buried in stones from the creation, live on until the creation shall be no more.

But this stern heaviness was only for the waking hour. Night had its old implacable dominion over me; full of vivid misery, crowded with the bitter sweet of memory. I

wandered free among those, in whose faces and forms my spirit found matchless loveliness; then the cruel caprice of fancy would sting me; in the very concord of enchanting sounds, there would come a funereal voice. In the circle of the happy, I was appalled by some hideous visage uttering words of mystery. A spectral form would hang upon my steps, and tell me that I was undone.

From one of those miserable slumbers I was roused by a voice pronouncing my name. I at first confounded it with the wanderings of sleep. But a chilling touch upon my forehead, completely aroused me. It was night, yet my eyes, accustomed to the darkness, gradually discovered the first intruder who ever stood within my living grave; nothing human could look more like the dead. A breathing skeleton stood before me. The skin clung to his bones, misery was in every feature, the voice was scarcely above a whisper.

"Rise," said this wretched being, "prince of Naphtali, you are free; follow me."

Strange thoughts were in the words. Was this indeed the universal summoner? the being whom the prosperous dread, but the wretched love? Had the King of terrors stood before me, I could not have gazed on him with more wonder. "Rise," said the voice impatiently; "we have but an hour till day-break, and you must escape now, or never." The sound of freedom scattered my apathy. The world opened upon my heart; country, friends, children, were in the word, and I started up with the feeling of one, to whom life is given on the scaffold.

My guide hurried forward through the winding way to the door. He stopped, I heard him utter a groan, strike fiercely against the bars, and fall. I found him lying at the threshold without speech or motion; carried him back; and, by the help of the cruse of water left to moisten my solitary meal, restored him to his senses.

"The wind," said he, "must have closed the door, and we are destined to die together. So be it; with neither of us can the struggle be

long.—Farewell!" He flung himself upon his face in a corner, and seemed to sleep. A noise of some heavy instrument roused us both. He listened, and said, "There is hope still. The slave who let me in, is forcing the door." We rushed to assist him; and tugged and tore at the massive stones in which the hinges were fixed; but found our utmost strength ineffectual as an infant's. The slave now cried out, that he must give up the attempt; that day was breaking, and the guard were at hand. We implored him to try once more. By a violent effort, he drove his crow-bar through one of the pannels, the gleam of light gave us courage, and with our united strength we heaved at the joints, which were evidently loosening.

In the midst of our work, the slave fled; and I heard a plunge into the pool beneath. "He has perished," said my companion. "The door is on the face of a precipice. He has fallen in the attempt to escape, and we are now finally undone."

The guard, disturbed by the noise, arrived,

and in the depths of our cell we heard the day spent in making the impassable barrier firmer than ever.

For some hours my companion lay in that state of exhaustion, which I could not distinguish from uneasy slumber, and which I attributed to the fatigue of our mutual labours. But his groans became so deep, that I ventured to rouse him, and even to cheer him with the chances of escape.

"I have not slept," said he; "I shall never sleep again, until the grave gives me that slumber in which the wretched can alone find rest. Escape! No—for months, for years, I have had but one object; I have traversed mountain and sea for it, I have given to it day and night, all the wealth that I possessed in the world; I could give no more, but my life; and that too I was to give. I stood within sight of this object. Its attainment would have comforted my dying hour. But it is snatched from me in the very malice of fortune; and now the sooner I perish, the better." He writhed with mental pain.

"But what cause can you have for being here? You are no prisoner. You have not fought our tyrants. Who are you?"

"One whom you can never know. A being born to honour and happiness; but who perverted them by pride and revenge, and whose last miserable hope is, that he may die unknown, and without the curses that fall on the traitor and the murderer."

I knew the speaker, in those words of woe. I cried out, "Jubal, my friend, my kinsman, my hero; is it you then who have risked your life to save me?" I threw myself beside him. He crept from me. I caught his meagre hand. I forced food into his lips; in the deepest grief at his obvious suffering, I adjured him to live and hope.

He started away wildly. "Touch me not, Prince of Naphtali, I am unfit to live. I—I have been your ruin; and yet, he who knows the heart, knows that I alone am not to blame. I was a dupe, a slave to furious passions, the victim of evil councillors, the prey of disease of mind. What I did, was done in malice, but it

was done in madness too. On my crimes, may Heaven have mercy! for they are beyond the forgiveness of man."

By the feeble light, which showed scarcely more than the wretchedness of my dungeon, I made some little preparation for the refreshment of this feverish and famished being. His story agitated him; and, strongly awakened as my curiosity was, I forbore all question. But it lay a burden on his mind, and I suffered him to make his confession.

"I loved Salome," said he. "But I was so secure of acceptance, according to the custom of our tribe, that I never conceived the possibility of an obstacle to our marriage. My love and my pride were equally hurt by her rejection. The return of Salome from Rome, and the new distinctions of her husband, your gratitude, and the popular applause, made my envy bitterness. To change the scene, I went to Jerusalem. I there found the spirit of malice active. Your learning and talents had made you obnoxious long before, your new opulence and rank turned dislike into hatred. Onias,

whose dagger you turned from the bosom of the noble Eleazar, remembered his disgrace. He headed the conspiracy against you; and nothing but your heroism, and the daring vigour with which you stirred up the nation, could have saved you long since from the last extremities of faction and revenge. My unhappy state of mind threw me into his hands. I was inflamed against you by perpetual calumnies. My feelings, morbid with fancied wrongs, hurried me into violences of language and wild resolutions, that now strike me with wonder. It was even proposed, that I should accuse you before the Sanhedrim, of dealing with the powers of darkness. Proofs were offered, which my bewildered and broken reason could scarcely resist. I was assailed with subtle argument; the latent superstitions of my nature were stimulated by sights and scenes of strange import, horrid and mysterious displays, which implicate the leaders of Jerusalem deeply in the charges laid by our law upon the idolaters. Spirits, or the semblances of spirits, were raised before my eyes, voices were heard in the depths and in

the air, denouncing you, even you, as the enemy of Judea and of man. I was commanded, in the midst of thunders, real or feigned, to destroy you."

Here his voice sank, his frame quivered; and wrapping his head in his cloak, he remained long silent. To relieve him from this painful narrative, I asked for intelligence of my family and of the country.

"Of your family I can tell you nothing," said he, mournfully; "I shrank from the very mention of their name. During these two years, I had but one pursuit, the discovery of your prison. I refused to hear, to think of other things. I felt that I was dying, and I dreaded to appear before the great tribunal with the groans from your dungeon rising up to stifle my prayers."

"But is our country still torn by the Roman wolves?"

"Its destruction forced itself on my eyes. The whole land is in tumult. Blood and horror are under every roof from Lebanon to Idumea. The Roman sword is out, and it falls with cruel havock; but the Jewish dagger pays it home,

and the legions quail before the naked valour of the peasantry. But what are valour or patriotism to us now? we are in our grave!"

The thought of my family exposed to the miseries of a ferocious war, only kindled my eagerness to escape from this den of oblivion. I rose, it was evening, and the melancholy moon threw the old feeble gleam on the water, which had so long been to me the only mirror of her countenance. I observed the light darkened by a figure stealing along the edge of the pool. It approached, and the words were whispered: "It is impossible to break open the door from without, as the guard are on the watch; but try whether it cannot be opened from within." A crow-bar was pushed into the loop-hole; its bearer, the slave, who had escaped by swimming, jumped down and was gone.

I left Jubal where he lay, lingered at the door till all external sounds ceased, and then made my desperate attempt. I was wasted by confinement; but the mind is force. I laboured with furious effort at the mass of bolt and bar, and at length felt it begin to give way. I saw

a star, the first for two long years, twinkling through the fracture. A quarter of an hour's labour more unfixed the huge hinge, and I felt the night air cool and fragrant on my cheek. I now grasped the last bar, and was in the act of forcing it from the wall, when the thought of Jubal struck me. There was a struggle of a moment in my mind. To linger now, might be to give the guard time to intercept me. I was ravening for liberty. It was to me now, what water in the desert is to the dying caravan. It was the sole assuaging of a frantic thirst, of a fiery and consuming fever of the soul. If every grain of dust under my feet were diamonds, I would have given them to feel myself treading the dewy grass that lay waving on the hill-side before me.

A tall shadow passed along, and compelled me to pause. It was that of a mountain shepherd, spear in hand, guarding his flock from the depredations of the wolves. He stopped at a short distance from the dungeon, and, gazing on the moon, broke out with a rude, but not unsweet voice into song. The melody was wild, a

lamentation over the fallen glories of Judea; "whose sun was set, and whose remaining light, sad and holy as the beauty of the moon, must soon decay." The word freedom mingled in the strain, and every note of that solemn strain vibrated to my heart. The shepherd passed along.

I tore down the bar, and gazed upon the glorious face of heaven. My feet were upon the free ground. I returned hastily to the cell, and told Jubal the glad tidings; but he heard me not. To abandon him there was to give him up to inevitable death, either by the rage of the guard, or by the less merciful infliction of famine. I carried him on my shoulders to the entrance.

A roar of wrath, mixed with ridicule, broke on me, as I touched the threshold. The guard stood drawn up in front of the dilapidated door; and the sight of the prisoner entrapped in the very crisis of escape, was the true food for ruffian mirth. Staggering under my burden, I yet burst forward, but I was received in a circle of levelled spears. Resistance was desperate; yet,

even when sunk upon the ground under my burden, I attempted to resist, or gather their points in my bosom and perish. But my feeble efforts only raised new scoffing. I was unworthy of Roman steel; and the guard, after amusing themselves with my impotent rage, dragged me within the passage, placed Jubal, who neither spoke nor moved, beside me, blocked up the door, and wished me "better success the next time."

I spent the remainder of that night in fierce agitation. The apathy, the protecting scorn of external things that I had nurtured, as other men would nurture happiness, was gone. The glimpse of the sky haunted me; a hundred times in the course of the night I thought that I was treading on the grass, that I felt its refreshing moisture; that the air was breathing balm on my cheek; that the shepherd's song was still echoing in my ears, and that I saw him pointing to a new way of escape from my inextricable dungeon. In one of my ramblings I fell over Jubal. Exasperated at the stern reality round me, I flung the crow-bar from my

hand. A sound followed, like the fall of large stones into water. The sound continued. Still stranger echoes followed, which my bewildered fancy turned into all similitudes of earth and ocean; the march of troops, the distant roar of thunder, the dashing of billows, the clamour of battle, the boisterous mirth of Bacchanalians; the groaning and heaving of masts and rigging tossed by storm.

The dungeon was dark as death, and I felt my way towards the sound. To my surprise, the accidental blow of the bar had loosened a part of the wall; and made an orifice large enough to admit the human body. The pale light of morning showed a cavern beyond, narrow and rugged; but into which I was resolved to penetrate. It branched into a variety of passages, some of them fit for nothing but the fox's burrow. Two were wider. I returned to the lair of my unhappy companion, and prevailed on him to follow, only by the declaration, that if he refused, I must perish by his side. My scanty provisions were gathered up. I led the way; and, determined never to return to the

place of my misery, we set forward, to tempt in utter darkness the last chances of famine—pilgrims of the tomb.

We wandered through a fearful labyrinth for a period which utterly exhausted us. Of night or day we had no knowledge; but hunger keenly told us that it was long. I was sinking; when a low groan struck my ear. I listened pantingly: it came again. It was evidently from some object close beside me. I put forth my hand, and pulled away a projecting stone: a flash of light illumined the passage. Another step would have plunged us into a pool a thousand feet below.

CHAPTER XV.

The cavern thus opened to us was large, and seemed to be the magazine of some place of trade. It was crowded with chests and bales heaped together in disorder. But life and liberty were before us. I cheered Jubal, till his scattered senses returned, and he clasped my feet in humiliation and gratitude.

We were like men created anew. Sudden strength nerved our limbs: we forced our way through piles, that but an hour before would have been mountains to our despairing strength. After long labour we worked our passage to a door. It opened into another cavern, palpably the dwelling of some master of extraordinary

opulence. Rich tissues were hung on the walls; the ceiling was a Tyrian canopy; precious vases stood on tables of citron and ivory. A large lyre superbly ornamented hung in an opening of the rock, and gave its melancholy music to the wind. But no human being was to be seen. Was this one of the true wonders that men classed among the fictions of Greece and Asia? The Nereids with their queen could not have sought a more secluded palace. Still onward were heard the sounds of ocean. We followed them, and saw one of those scenes of grandeur which nature creates, as if to show the littleness of man.

An arch three times the height of the loftiest temple, and ribbed with marble, rose broadly over our heads. Innumerable shafts of the purest alabaster, rounded with the perfection of sculpture, rose in groups and clusters to the solemn roof: wild flowers and climbing plants of every scent and hue gathered round the capitals, and hung the gigantic sides of the hall with a lovelier decoration than ever was wrought in loom. The awful beauty of this

ocean-temple bowed the heart in instinctive homage. I felt the sacredness of nature.

But this grandeur was alone worthy of the spectacle to which it opened. The whole magnificence of the Mediterranean spread before our eyes, smooth as polished silver, and now reflecting the glories of the west. The sun lay on the horizon in the midst of crimson clouds, like a monarch on the funeral pile, sinking in conflagration that lighted earth and ocean.

But at this noble portal we had reached our limit. The sides of the cavern projected so far into the waters as to make a small anchorage. Access or escape by land was palpably impossible. Yet here at least we were masters. No claimant presented himself to dispute our title. The provisions of our unknown host were ample, and, to our eager tastes, dangerous from their luxury. The evening that we passed over our repast at the entrance of the cave, exhilarated with the first sensation of liberty, and enjoying every aspect and voice of the lovely scene with the keenness of the most unhoped-

for novelty, was a full recompense for the toils and terrors of the labyrinth.

All before us was peace.—The surge that died at our feet murmured peace; the wheeling sea-birds, as their long trains steered homeward, pouring out from time to time a clangor of wild sounds that descended to us in harmony; the little white-sailed vessels, that skimmed along the distant waters like flies; the breeze waving the ivy and arbutus that festooned our banquet-hall; alike spoke to the heart the language of peace.

"If," said I, "my death-bed were left to my own choice, on the verge of this cavern would I wish to take my last farewell."

"To the dying all places must be indifferent," replied my companion: "when Death is at hand, his shadow fills the mind. What matters it to the exile, who in a few moments must leave his country for ever, on what spot of its shore his last step is planted? Perhaps the lovelier that spot, the more painful the parting. If I must have my choice, let me die in the dungeon, or in battle; in the chain that makes

me hate the earth, or in the struggle that makes it be forgotten."

"Yet, even for battle, if we would acquit ourselves as becomes men, is not some previous rest almost essential? and for the sterner conflict with that mighty enemy, before whom our strength is vapour, is it not well to prepare with the whole means of mental fortitude? I would not perish in the irritation of the dungeon; in the blind fury of man against man; nor in the hot and giddy whirl of human cares. Let me lay my sinking frame where nothing shall intrude upon the nobler business of the mind. But these are melancholy thoughts. Come, Jubal, fill to the speedy deliverance of our country."

"Here, then, to her speedy deliverance, and the glory of those who fight her battles!" The cup was filled to the brim; but just as the wine touched his lips, he flung it away. "No," exclaimed he, in bitterness of soul, "it is not for such as I to join in the aspirations of the patriot and the soldier. Prince of Naphtali, your generous nature has forgiven me; but there is an accuser here," and he struck his withered hand

wildly upon his bosom, "that can never be silenced. Under the delusions, the infernal delusions of your enemies, I followed you through a long period of your career unseen. Every act, almost every thought, was made known to me; for you were surrounded by the agents of your enemies. I was urged by the belief that you were utterly accursed by our law, and that to drive the dagger to your heart was to redeem our cause. But the act was against my nature; and in the struggle my reason failed. When I stood before you on the morning of the great battle, you saw me in one of those fits of frenzy that always followed a new command to murder. The misery of seeing Salome's husband once more triumphant finally plunged me into the Roman ranks to seek for death. I escaped, followed the army, and reached Bethoron in the midst of the assault. Still frantic, I thought that in you I saw my rival victorious; and sprang upon the wall. It was this hand, this parricidal hand, that struck the blow—." He covered his face, and sighed convulsively.

The mystery of my captivity was now cleared

up, and feeling only pity and forgiveness for the ruin that remorse had made, I succeeded at last in restoring him to some degree of calmness. I even ventured to cheer him with the hope of better days, when in the palace of my fathers I should acknowledge my deliverer. With a pressure of the hand, and a melancholy smile, "I know," said he, "that I have not long to live. But if any prayer of mine is to be answered by the Power that I have so deeply offended, it would be to die in some act of service to my prince and generous benefactor. But hark!"

A groan was uttered close to the spot where we sat. I perceived for the first time an opening behind some furniture; entered, and saw lying on a bed a man apparently in the last stage of exhaustion. He exclaimed, "Three days of misery,—three days left alone, to die;—without food, without help, abandoned by all. But I have deserved it. Traitor and villain as I am, I have deserved a thousand deaths!"

I looked upon this as but the raving of pain, and brought him some wine. He swallowed it

with fierce avidity; but, even while I held the cup to his lips, he sank back with a cry of horror. "Aye," cried he, "I knew that I could not escape you; you are come at last. Spirit, leave me to die. Or if," said he, half rising, and looking in my face with a steady yet dim glare, "you can tell the secrets of the grave, tell me what is my fate. I adjure you, fearful being, by the God of Israel; by the gods of the Pagan; or if you acknowledge any god beyond the last hour of miserable man, tell me what I am to be."

I continued silent, and struck with the agony of his features. Jubal entered, and the looks of the dying man were turned on him.

"More of them!" he exclaimed, "more tormentors! more terrible witnesses of the tortures of a wretch whom earth casts out! What I demand of you is the fate of those who live as I have lived—the betrayer, the plunderer, the man of blood? But you will give me no answer. The time for your power is not come." He lay for a short period in mental sufferings: then, starting up on his feet by an extraordinary

effort of nature, and with furious execrations at the tardiness of death, he tore off the bandage which covered a wound on his forehead. The blood streamed down, and made him a ghastly spectacle. "Aye," cried he, as he looked upon his stained hands, "this is the true colour; the traitor's blood should cover the traitor's hands. Years of crime, this is your reward. The betrayal of my noble master to death, the ruin of his house, the destruction of his name; these were the right beginning to the life of the robber."

A peal of thunder rolled over our heads, and the gush of the rising waves roared through the cavern.

"Aye, there is your army," he cried, "coming in the storm. I have seen your angry visages at night in the burning village; I have seen you in the shipwreck; I have seen you in the howling wilderness; but now I see you in shapes more terrible than all."

The wind bursting through the long vaults, forced open the door. "Welcome, welcome to your prey," he yelled, and drawing a knife from

his sash, darted it into his bosom. The act was so instantaneous, that to arrest the blow was impossible. He fell, and died with a brief, fierce struggle.

"Horrible end," murmured Jubal, gazing on the stiffened form;—"here is theory answered at once; happier for that wretch to have perished in the hottest strife of man or nature, trampled in the charge, or plunged into the billows! But, save me from the misery of lonely death!"

"Yet it was our presence that made him feel. He was guilty of some crime, perhaps of many, that the sight of us strangely awoke to torment his dying hour. He gazed upon me with evident alarm, and, not improbably, my withered face, and those rags of my dungeon, startled him into recollections too strong for his decaying reason."

"Have you ever seen him before?"

"Never." I gave a reluctant look to the hideous distortion of a countenance still full of the final agony.

"Now, to think of ourselves. We shall

have soon our own experiment fairly tried. A few days must exhaust our provisions. The surges roll on the one hand, on the other we have the rock. But we shall die at least in pomp. No king of Asia will lie in a nobler vault, nor even have sincerer rejoicings at his end; the crows and vultures are no hypocrites," said Jubal, with a melancholy smile.

The dead man's turban had fallen off in his last violence, and I perceived the corner of a letter in its folds. Its intelligence startled me. It was from the commandant of the Roman fleet on the coast, mentioning that a squadron was in readiness to "attack the pirates in their cavern."

A heavy sound, as if something of immense weight had rushed into the entrance of the arch, and then the echo of many voices stopped our conversation.

"The Romans have come," said I, "and you will be now indulged with your wish: our lives are forfeited; for never will I go back to the dungeon."

"I hear no sound but that of laughter," said Jubal, listening; "those invaders are the mer-

riest of cut-throats. But, before we give ourselves actually into their hands, let us see of what they are made."

We left the chamber, and returned to the recess from which we had originally emerged. Its position commanded a view of the chief avenues and chambers of the cavern; and while I was busy below in securing the door, Jubal mounted the wall, and reconnoitred the enemy through a fissure. "Those are no Romans," whispered he, "but a set of the most jovial fellows that ever robbed on the seas. They have clearly been driven in by the storm, and are now preparing to feast. Their voyage has been lucky, if I am to judge by the bales that they are hauling in; and if wine can do it, they will be in an hour or two drunk to the last man."

"Then we can take advantage of their sleep, let loose one of their boats, and away."

I mounted, to see this pirate festivity. In the various vistas of the huge cavern, groups of bold-faced and athletic men were gathered, all busy with the bustle of the time: some piling

fires against the walls, and preparing provisions: some stripping off their wet garments, and bringing others out of heaps of every kind and colour, from recesses in the rock: some furbishing their arms, and wiping the spray from rusty helmets and corselets. The hollow vaults rang with songs, boisterous laughter, the rattling of armour, and the creaking and rolling of chests of plunder. The dashing of the sea under the gale filled up this animated dissonance; and at intervals the thunder bursting directly above our heads, overpowered all, and silenced all.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE chamber, whose costly equipment first told us of the opulence of its masters, was set apart for the chief rovers, who were soon seated at a large table in its centre, covered with luxury. Flagons of wine were brought from cellars known only to the initiated; fruits piled in silver baskets blushed along the board; plate of the richest workmanship, the plunder of palaces and temples, glittered in every form; tripods loaded with aromatic wood threw a blaze up to the marble roof; and from the central arch hung a superb Greek lamp, shooting out light from a hundred mouths of serpents twined in all possible ways. The party before

me were about thirty; as fierce looking figures as ever toiled through tempest: some splendidly attired, some in the rough costume of the deck; but all jovial, and determined to make the most of their time. Other men had paid for the banquet; and there was probably not a vase on their table that was not the purchase of personal hazard. They sat, conquerors, in the midst of their own trophies; and not the most self-indulgent son of opulence could have more luxuriated in his wealth, nor the most exquisite student of epicurism have discussed his luxuries with more finished and fastidious science. Lounging on couches covered with embroidered draperies, too costly for all but princes, they lectured the cooks without mercy: the venison, pheasants, sturgeon, and a multitude of other dishes, were in succession pronounced utterly unfit to be touched; and the wine was tasted, and dismissed with the scorn of palates refined to the highest point of delicacy. Yet the sea air was not to be trifled with: and a succession of courses appeared, and were despatched with a diligence that prohi-

bited all language, beyond the pithy phrases of delight or disappointment.

The wine at length set the conversation flowing; and, from the merits of the various vintages, the speakers diverged into the general subjects of politics and their profession; on the former of which they visited all parties with tolerably equal ridicule; and, on the latter, declared unanimously, that the only cause worthy of a man of sense was the cause for which they were assembled round that table. The next stage was the more hazardous one of personal jocularity; yet even this was got over, with but a few murmurs from the parties suffering. Songs and toasts to themselves, their loves, matron and maid, within the shores of the Mediterranean; and their enterprises in all time to come, relieved the drier topics; and all was good fellowship, until one unlucky goblet of spoiled wine soured the table.

"So, this you call Chian," exclaimed a broad-built figure, whose yellow hair and blue eyes showed him a son of the north; "may I be poisoned," and he made a hideous grimace, "if

more detestable vinegar ever was brewed; let me but meet the merchant, and I shall teach him a lesson, that he will remember, when next he thinks of murdering men at their meals. Here, baboon, take it, it is fit only for such as you." He flung the goblet point-blank at the head of a negro, who escaped it only by bounding to one side with the agility of the ape, that he much resembled.

"Bad news, Vladomir, for our winter's stock, for half of it is Chian," said a dark-featured and brilliant-eyed Arab, who sat at the head of the table. "Ho! Syphax, fill round from that flagon, and let us hold a council of war upon the delinquent wine."

The slave dexterously changed the wine; it was poured round, pronounced first-rate, and the German was laughed at remorselessly.

"I suppose I am not to believe my own senses," remonstrated Vladomir.

"Oh! by all means, as long as you keep them," said one, laughing.

"Will you tell me, that I don't know the difference between wine and that poison."

"Neither you nor any man, friend Vladomir, can know much upon the subject after his second dozen of goblets;" sneered another at the German's national propensity.

"You do him injustice," said a subtle-visaged Chiote at the opposite side of the table. "He is as much in his senses this moment as ever he was. There are brains of that happy constitution, which defies alike reason and wine."

"Well, I shall say no more," murmured the German sullenly, "than, confound the spot on which that wine grew, wherever it lies; the hungriest vineyard on the Rhine would be ashamed to show its equal. By Woden, the very taste will go with me to my grave."

"Perhaps it may," said the Chiote, irritated for the honour of his country, and significantly touching his dagger. "But were you ever in the island?"

"No; nor ever shall, with my own consent, if that flagon be from it," growled the German, with his broad eye glaring on his adversary: "I have seen enough of its produce, alive and dead to-night."

The wind roared without, and a tremendous thunder-peal checked the angry dialogue. There was a general pause.

"Come, comrades, no quarreling," cried the Arab. "Heavens, how the storm comes on! Nothing can ride out to-night. Here's the captain's health, and safe home to him." The cups were filled; but the disputants were not to be so easily reconciled.

"Ho! Memnon," cried the master of the table to a sallow Egyptian richly clothed, and whose scimitar and dagger sparkled with jewels. He was engaged in close council with the rover at his side. "Lay by business now; you don't like the wine, or the toast?"

The Egyptian startled from his conference, professed his perfect admiration of both, and sipping, returned to his whisper.

"Memnon won't drink, for fear of letting out his secrets; for instance, where he found that scimitar, or what has become of the owner," said a young and handsome Idumean, with a smile.

"I should like to know by what authority

you ask me questions on the subject. If it had been in your hands, I should have never thought any necessary," retorted the scowling Egyptian.

" Aye, of course not, Memnon: my way is well known.—Fight rather than steal; plunder rather than cheat; and, after the affair is over, account to captain and crew, rather than glitter in their property," was the Idumean's answer, with a glow of indignation reddening his striking features.

" By the bye," said the Arab, in whose eye the gems flashed temptingly: " I think that Memnon is always under a lucky star. We come home in rags, but he regularly returns the better for his trip: why, Ptolemy himself has not a more exquisite tailor. All depends, however, upon a man's knowledge of navigation in this world."

" And friend Memnon knows every point of it, but plain sailing," said the contemptuous Idumean.

The Egyptian's sallow skin grew livid. " I may be coward, or liar, or pilferer, or what you will," exclaimed he; " but, if I were the whole

three, I could stand no chance of being distinguished in the present company."

"Insult to the whole profession," exclaimed the Arab. "And now I insist, in the general name, on your giving a plain account of the proceeds of your last cruise. You can be at no loss for it."

"No; for he has it by his side, and in the most brilliant arithmetic," said Hanno, a satirical-visaged son of Carthage.

"I must hear no more on the subject," bitterly pronounced the Egyptian. "Those diamonds belong to neither captain nor crew. I purchased them fairly; and the seller was, I will undertake to say, the better off of the two."

"Yes; I will undertake to say," laughed the Idumean, "that you left him the happiest dog in existence. It is care that makes us all miserable; and the less we have to care for, the luckier we are. I have not a doubt you left the fellow at the summit of earthly rapture!"

"Aye!" added the Arab, "without a sorrow or a shekel in the world."

Boisterous mirth followed the Egyptian, as he started from his couch and left the hall; casting fierce looks in his retreat, like Parthian arrows, on the carousal.

The German had, in the mean time, fallen back in a doze; from which he was disturbed by the slave's refilling his goblet.

"Aye, that tastes like wine," said he, glancing at the Greek, who had by no means forgotten the controversy.

"Taste what it may, it is the very same wine that you railed at half an hour ago," returned the Chiote: "the truth is, my good Vladomir, that the wine of Greece is like its language; both are exquisite and unrivalled, to those who understand them. But Nature wisely adapts tastes to men, and men to tastes. I am not at all surprised, that north of the Danube they prefer beer."

The German had nothing to give back for the taunt, but the frown that gathered on his black brow.

The Chiote pursued his triumph; and with a languid, lover-like gaze on the wine, which

sparkled in purple radiance to the brim of its enamelled cup, he apostrophized the produce of his fine country. "Delicious grape—essence of the sun-shine and of the dew—what vales but the vales of Chios could have produced thee! What tint of heaven is brighter than thy hue; what fragrance of earth, richer than thy perfume!"

He lightly sipped a few drops from the edge, like a libation to the deity of taste.

"Exquisite draught," breathed he; "unequalled but by the rosy lip and melting sigh of beauty. Well spoke the proverb—'Chios, whose wines steal every head; and whose women, every heart.'"

"You forget the rest," gladly interrupted the German:—"And whose men steal every thing." A general laugh followed the retort, such as it was.

"Scythian!" said the Greek, across the table, in a voice made low by rage, and preparing to strike.

"Liar!" roared the German, sweeping a blow of his falchion, which the Chiote es-

caped only by flinging himself on the ground. The blow fell on the table, where it caused wide devastation. All now started up, swords were out on every side; and nothing but forcing the antagonists to their cells, prevented the last perils of a difference of palate.

The storm bellowed deeper and deeper.

" Here's to the luck that sent us back before this Northwester thought of stirring abroad," said the Arab: " I wish our noble captain were among us now. Where was he last seen?"

" Steering westward, off and on Rhodes, looking out for the galley that carried the Procurator's plate. But this wind must send him in before morning," was the answer of Hanno.

" Or send him to the bottom, where many as bold a fellow has gone before him," whispered a tall haggard-looking Italian to the answerer.

" That would be good news, for one of us at least," said Hanno. " You would have no reckoning to settle. Your crew made a handsome affair of that Alexandrian prize. And

the captain might be looking for returns, friend Tertullus."

"Then let him look to himself. His time may be nearer than he thinks. His haughtiness, and trampling upon men as good as himself, may provoke justice before long," growled the Italian, indignant at some late discipline.

"Justice!—is the man mad? The very sound is high treason in our gallant company. Why, comrade, if justice ever ventured here, where would some of us have been these last six months?"

The sound caught the general ear; the allusion was understood, and the Italian was displeased.

"I hate to be remarkable," said he: "with the honest, it may be proper to be honest; but beside you, my facetious Hanno, a man should cultivate a little of the opposite school, in mere compliment to his friend. You had no scruples, when you hanged the merchant the other day."

A murmur rose in the hall.

"Comrades," said Hanno, with the air of an orator; "hear me too on that subject: three

words will settle the question to men of sense. The merchant was a regular trader. Will any man who knows the world, and has brains an atom clearer than those with which Heaven in its mercy has gifted my virtuous friend, believe that I, a regular liver by the merchant, would extinguish that by which I live? Sensible physicians never kill a patient, while he can pay; sensible kings never exterminate a province, when it can produce any thing in the shape of a tax; sensible women never pray for the extinction of the male sex, until they despair of getting husbands; sensible husbands never wish their wives out of the world, while they can get any thing by their living: so, sensible men of our profession will never put a merchant under water, until they can make nothing by his remaining above it. I have, for instance, raised contributions on that same trader every summer these five years; and, by the blessing of fortune, hope to have the same thing to say for five times as many years to come. No; I would not see any man touch a hair of his head. In six months he will have a cargo again, and I

shall meet him with as much pleasure as ever." The Carthaginian was highly applauded.

"Malek, you don't drink;" cried the Arab to a gigantic Ethiopian towards the end of the table. "Here, I pledge you in the very wine that was marked for the Emperor's cellar."

Malek tasted it, and sent back a cup in return.

"The Emperor's wine may be good enough for him," was the message.—"But this cup contains the wine marked for the Emperor's butler."

The verdict was fully in favour of the Ethiopian.

"In all matters of this kind," said Malek, with an air of supreme taste, "I look first to the stores of the regular professors—the science of life is in the masters of the kitchen and the cellar. Your Emperors and Procurators, of course, must be content with what they can get. But the man who wishes to have the first-rate dinner, should be on good terms with the cook and the butler. I caught this sample

on my last voyage after the imperial fleet. Nero never had such wine on his table."

He indulged himself in a long draught of this exclusive luxury; and sank on his couch, with his hand clasping the superbly-embossed flagon, a part of his prize.

"The black churl," said a little shrivelled Syrian, "never shares: he keeps his wine, as he keeps his money."

"Aye, he keeps every thing but his character," whispered Hanno.

"There you wrong him," observed the Syrian; "no man keeps his character more steadily. By Beelzebub! it is like his skin; neither will he blacker the longest day he has to live."

A roar of laughter rose round the hall.

"Black or not black," exclaimed the Ethiopian, with a sullen grin, that showed his teeth like the fangs of a wild beast, "my blood's as red as yours."

"Possibly," retorted the little Syrian; "but, as I must take your word on the subject till I shall have seen a drop of it spilt in fair fight, I only hope I may live and be happy till then; and

I cannot put up a better prayer for a merry old age."

"There is no chance of your ever seeing it," growled the Ethiopian; "you love the baggage and the hold too well to leave them to accident, be the fight fair or foul."

The laugh was easily raised; and it was turned against the Syrian, who started up, and declaimed with a fury of gesture, that made the ridicule still louder.

"I appeal to all," cried the fiery orator. "I appeal to every man of honour among us, whether by night or day, on land or water, I have ever been backward?"

"Never at an escape," interrupted the Ethiopian.

"Whether I have ever broken faith with the band?"

"Likely enough: where nobody trusts, we may defy treason."

"Whether my character and services are not known and valued by our captain?" still louder exclaimed the irritated Syrian.

"Aye, just as little as they deserve."

"Silence, brute," screamed the diminutive adversary, casting his keen eyes, that doubly blazed with rage, on the Ethiopian, who still lay embracing the flagon at his ease. "With heroes of your complexion I disdain all contest. If I must fight, it shall be with human beings, not with savages—with men, not monsters."

The Ethiopian's black cheek absolutely grew red: this taunt was the sting. At one prodigious bound he sprang across the table, and darted upon the Syrian's throat with the roar and the fury of a tiger.

All was instant confusion: lamps, flagons, fruits, were trampled on; the table was overthrown; swords and poniards flashed in all hands. The little Syrian yelled, strangling in the grasp of the black giant; and it was with the utmost difficulty that he could be rescued. The Arab, a fine athletic fellow, achieved this object, and bade him run for his life: a command with which he complied unhesitatingly; followed by a cheer from Hanno, who swore that if all trades failed, he would make his fortune by his heels at the Olympic games."

Our share of the scene was come. The fugitive, naturally bold enough, but startled by the savage ferocity of his antagonist, made his way towards our place of refuge. The black got loose, and pursued. I disdained to be dragged forth as a lurking culprit; and flinging open the door, stood before the crowd.

The effect was marvellous. The tumult was hushed at once. Terror seized upon their boldest. Our haggard forms, seen by that half intoxication which bewilders the brain before it enfeebles the senses, were completely fitted to startle the superstition that lurks in the bosom of every son of the sea; and for the moment, they evidently took us for something better or worse than man.

THE TANJORE ✻ MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL ✻

CHAPTER XVII.

BUT the delusion was short-lived; my voice broke the spell; and perhaps the consciousness of their idle alarm increased their rage. "Spies" was then the outcry; and this dreaded sound brought from their beds and tables the whole band. It was in vain that I attempted to speak; the mob have no ears, whether in cities or caves; and we were dragged forward to undergo our examination. Yet what was to be done in the midst of a host of tongues, all questioning, accusing, and swearing together?

Some were ready to take every star of heaven to witness, that we were a pair of Paphlagonian pilots, and the identical ones hired

to run two of their ships aground, by which the best expedition of the year was undone. Others knew us to have been in the regular pay of the Procurator, and the means of betraying their last captain to the axe. But the majority honoured us with the character of simple thieves, who had taken advantage of their absence, and been driven to hide among the baggage.

The question next arose; "how we could have got in?" and for the first time the carousers thought of their centinel. I told them what I had seen. They poured into his chamber, and their suspicions were fixed in inexorable reality—"We had murdered him." The speediest death for us was now the only consideration. Every man had his proposal; and never were more curious varieties of escape from this evil world offered to two wretches already weary of it; but the Arab's voice carried the point. "He disliked seeing men tossed into the fire; ropes were too useful, and the sword was too honourable, to be employed on rogues. But, as by water we came, by water we should go."

The sentence was received with a shout; and amidst laughter, furious cries, and threats of vengeance, we were dragged to the mouth of the cave.

The sternest suicide must die in his own way, or he will shrink. I was reckless of life; but I had not prepared myself for this midnight divorce from the world. The tempest was appalling. The waves burst into the anchorage in huge heaps, dashing sheets of foam up to its roof. The wind volleyed in gusts that took the strongest off their feet; the galleys were tossed, as if they were so many weeds on the surface of the water. Lamps and torches were useless; and the only light was from the funereal gleam of the billows, and the sheets of sulphurous fire that fell upon the turbulence of ocean beyond. Even the hardy forms round me were disheartened; and I took advantage of a furious gust that swung us all aside, to struggle from their grasp, and seizing a pike, fight for my life. Jubal seconded me with the boldness that no decay could exhaust; and setting our backs to the rock, we for a while baffled our execu-

tioners. But this could not last against such numbers as poured to their assistance. Our pikes were broken; we were hemmed in, and finally dragged again to the mouth of the cavern, that, with its foam and the howl of the tumbling billows, looked like the jaws of some huge monster ready for its prey.

Enfeebled, bruised, and overpowered, I was on the point of denying my murderers their last indulgence, and plunging headlong; when a trumpet sounded. The pirates loosed their hold; and in a few minutes a large galley with all her oars broken, and every sail torn to fragments, shot by the mouth of the cavern. A joyous cry of "The captain! the captain!" echoed through the vaults. The galley, disabled by the storm, tacked several times before she could make the entrance; but at length, by a masterly manœuvre, she was brought round, and darted right in on the top of a mountainous billow. Before the galley touched the ground, the captain had leaped into the arms of the band, who received him with shouts. His quick eye fell upon us at once, and he de-

manded fiercely, "what we were?" "Spies and thieves," was the general reply. "Spies!" he repeated; looking contemptuously on our habiliments. "Impossible. — Thieves, very likely, and very beggarly ones.—Yet, do you think that such wretches would dare to come, of themselves, within our claws?"

I denied both imputations alike. He seemed struck with my words, and said to the crowd, "Folly! Take them away, if it does not require too much courage to touch them; and let them be washed and fed, for the honour of hospitality and their own faces. The two poor devils have doubtless been driven in by the rough night; and it is rough enough to make a man wish to be any where but abroad. Here, change my clothes, and order supper."

"We cannot be too cautious. They may still be spies," said the Egyptian, who had just arrived from his slumbers.

I attempted to explain how we came.

"Of course—of course," said the captain, pulling off his dripping garments, and flinging his cloak to one, his cuirass to another, and his

cap to a third. "Your rags would vouch for you in any port on earth. Or, if you carry on the trade of treachery, you are very ill paid. Why, Memnon, look at these fellows; would you give a shekel for their souls and bodies? Not a mite. When I look for spies, I expect to find them among the prosperous. The rogues who deal in secret intelligence, take too good care of themselves. Embroidered cloaks and jewel-hilted scimitars are a safer sign than naked skins at any time. However, if you turn out to be spies; eat, drink and sleep your best to-night, for you shall be hanged to-morrow."

He hurried onwards, and we followed, still in durance. The banquet was reinstated; and the principal personages of the band gathered round to hear the adventures of the voyage.

"All has been ill luck," said he, tossing off a bumper. "The old procurator's spirit was, I think, abroad; either to take care of his plate, or to torment mankind, according to his custom. We were within a boat's length of the prize, when the wind came right in our teeth. Every thing that could, ran for the harbour: some

went on the rocks—some straight to the bottom; and that we might not follow their example, I put the good ship before the wind, and never was better pleased than to find myself at home. Thus, you see, comrades, that my history is brief; but then it has an advantage that history sometimes denies itself—every syllable of it is true."

As the light of the lamps fell on him, it struck me that his face was familiar to my recollection. He was young, but the habits of his life had given him a premature manhood; his eye flashed and sparkled with Greek brilliancy, but his cheek, after the first flush of the banquet, was pale; and the thinness of a physiognomy naturally masculine and noble, showed that either care or hardship had lain heavily upon his days.

He had scarcely set down to the table, when, his glance turning where we stood guarded, he ordered us to be brought before him.

"I think," said he, "you came here but a day or two ago. Did you find no difficulty with our sentinels?"

"Ha!" exclaimed the Arab, "how could I have forgotten that? I left Titus, or by whatever of his hundred names he chose to be called, on guard, at his own request, the day I steered for the Nile. He was sick, or pretended to be so; and, as I gave myself but a couple of days for the voyage, I expected to be back in time to save him from the horrors of his own company. But the wind said otherwise—the two days were ten; and on my return, we found the wretched fellow a corpse,—whether from being taken ill, and unable to help himself, or from the assistance of those worthy persons here, whom we discovered in attendance."

"On that subject, I have no doubt whatever," interposed the Egyptian: "those villains murdered him."

"It is possible," mused the captain. "But I cannot foresee what they were to get by it. A question that you at least will acknowledge to be of considerable importance," said he, with a careless smile at the Egyptian, whose avarice was proverbial.

The object of the satire was stung; and to

get rid of the dangerous topic, he affected wrath, and said impetuously, "Let it be so; let our blood go for nothing. Let treachery thrive. Let our throats be at the mercy of every wandering ruffian; and let us have the consolation that our labours and our sacrifices will be honoured with a sneer." He turned to the crowd waiting round us. "Brave comrades!" exclaimed he, "henceforth understand that you are at every dagger's mercy; that, if you are left behind, you may be assassinated with impunity: as, if you are taken out upon our foolish expeditions, your lives may be flung away upon the whims and follies of would-be heroes."

The crowd, fickle, and inflamed by wine, gave a huzza for the "sailor's friend." The Egyptian encouraged, and having a long load of gall upon his memory, made the desperate venture of at once disowning the authority of the captain, and ordering in his own name that we should be delivered over to execution.

The captain listened, without a word; but his hand was on his scimitar, and his cheek burned, as he fixed his eyes on the livid accuser. The

crowd pressed closer upon us; and I saw the dagger pointed at my breast—when I recollected the letter; I gave it to the captain, who read it in silence; and then with the utmost composure, desired it to be handed over to the Egyptian.

"Comrades," said he, "I have to apologize for a breach of the confidence that should always subsist between men of honour. I have here accidentally read a letter which the cipher shows to have been intended for our trusty friend Memnon; but, since the subject is no longer confined to himself, he will doubtless feel no objection to indulging us all with the correspondence."

The band thronged round the table; expectation sat on every face; and its various expression in the crowded circle of those strong physiognomies—the keen, the wondering, the angry, the contemptuous, the convinced, the triumphant—would have made an incomparable study for a painter. The Egyptian took the letter with a trembling hand, and read the fatal words.

"The fleet will be off the northern promontory by midnight. You will light a signal, and be ready to conduct the troops into the cavern."

The reader let the fatal despatch fall from his hands. An outcry of wrath rose on all sides; and the traitor was on the point of being sacrificed, when the young Idumean generously started forward.

"It is known, I believe, to every man here," said he, "that I dislike and distrust Memnon as much as any being on earth. I knew him to be base and cruel, and therefore hated him. I have long suspected him of being connected with transactions, that nothing but the madness of avarice could venture upon, and nothing but death atone. But he must not perish without trial. Till inquiry is made, the man who strikes him must strike through me." He placed himself before the culprit; who now taking courage, long and dexterously insisted that the letter was a forgery, invented by "assassins and those who employed assassins."

The tide of popular wisdom is easily turned;

opinion was now raging against me, and the Egyptian stood a fair chance of seeing his reputation cleared in my blood.

"Come," said the captain, rising; "as we are not likely to gain much information from the living, let us see whether the dead can give us any: lead on, prisoners."

I led the way to the recess. The dead man lay untouched; but, in the interval, the features had returned, as is often the case in death, to the expression of former years. I uttered an exclamation; he was the domestic that had betrayed me to the Procurator.

"Conscience!" cried the Egyptian.

"Conscience!" echoed the crowd.

The captain turned to me. "Did either you or your companion commit this murder? I will have no long stories. They will not go down with me. The fellow was a villain; and if he had lived till my return, he should have fed the crows within the next twelve hours. One word —yes or no."

I answered firmly.

"I believe you," said the captain. He took

the hand of the corpse, and called to the Egyptian. "Take this hand, and swear that you know nothing of the treason. But, ha! what have we here?" As he lifted the arm, the sleeve of the tunic gave way, and a slip of papyrus fell on the bed. He caught it up, and exclaiming, "What! to-night? pernicious villain;"—turned to the astonished band.

"Comrades, there is the blackest treachery among us. We are sold—sold by that accursed Egyptian. Strip the slave, and fling him into the dungeon until I return; no—he shall come with us, in chains. Call up the band. Every galley must put to sea instantly, if we would not be burned in our beds."

The trumpets sounded through the cavern; and rapid preparations were made for obeying this unexpected command. The fires blazed again; arms and armour rang; men were mustered; and the galleys swung out from their moorings in the midst of tumult and volleys of execrations against the treachery, that "could not wait for daylight and fair weather."

"And now," said the captain, "while our

lads are getting ready, I think that it is time for me to sup. Sit down, and let us hear over our wine what story the prisoners have to tell."

I briefly stated our escape from the dungeon.

"It may be a lie; yet the thing hangs not badly together. Your wardrobe speaks prodigiously in favour of your veracity. Ho! Ben Ali, see that the avenue into the warehouse is stopped up. We must have no visits from the garrison of the tower. And now, hear my story of the night:—As I was lying off and on, waiting to catch that cursed galley, a correspondent on shore let me partly into the secret of that Egyptian dog's dealings. Rich as the knave was,—and how he came by his money, Tartarus only knows,—Roman gold had charms for him still. In fact, he had been carrying on a very handsome trade in information during the last six months; which may best account for the escape of the two fleets from Byzantium, and not less for the present safety of the procurator's plate; which, however, I hope, by the blessing of Neptune, to see, before another week, shining

upon this table. Your discovery was of infinite use. That an attack upon us was intended, I was aware; but the how and when were the difficulty. The time of the attack was announced in the papyrus; and but for the storm, we should probably be now doing other things than supping."

"The sea is going down already, and the wind has changed," said the Arab. "We can haul off the shore without loss of time."

"Then, the sooner the better. We must seal up the Romans in their port; or if they venture out on such a night, give them sound reason for wishing that they had stayed at home. Their galleys, if good for nothing else, will do to burn."

This bold determination was received with a general cheer: the leaders rose, and drank to the glory of their expedition; and all rushed towards the galleys, which, crowded with men, lay tossing at the edge of the arch.

I followed, and demanded what was to be our fate. "Here we will not stay: put us to

death at once, rather than leave us to perish here."

"Well then, what will you have?"

"Any thing but this desperate abandonment. Let us take the chances of your voyage, and be set on shore at the first place you touch."

"And sell our secret to the best bidder? No. But I have no time to make terms with you now. One word for all: ragged as you both are, you are strong; and your faces would do no great discredit to our profession. You probably think this no very striking compliment," said he, laughing. "However, I have taken a whim to have you with us, and offer you promotion. Will you take service with the noble company of the Free-trade?"

Jubal was rashly indignant; I checked him, and merely answered, that I had purposes of extreme exigency which prevented my accepting his offer.

"Ha! morality," exclaimed he; "you will not be seen with rogues like us?" He laughed

aloud. " Why, man, if you will not live, eat, drink, travel, and die, with rogues, where upon earth can you expect to live or die? The difference between us and the world is, that we do the thing without the additional vice of hypocrisy."

The leaders, who waited round us, felt for the honour of their calling; and, but for their awe of the captain, we stood but slight chance of living even to hear the question settled.

" A pike might let a little light into their understandings," said one.

" If they would not follow on the deck, they should swim at the stern," said another.

" The hermits should be sent back to their dungeon to study philosophy," said a third.

The boat was run up on the sand. " Get in," said the captain. " I have taken it into my head to convince you by fact, of the honour, dignity, and primitiveness of our profession: which is, in the first place, the oldest; for it was the original employment of human hands. In the next place, the most universal; for it is the principle of all trades,

pursuits, and professions, from the emperor on his throne, down through the doctor, the lawyer, and the merchant, to the very sediment of society.

A loud "bravo" echoed through the cavern.

"Are you not convinced yet?" said the captain. "The Free-trade is the very essence of the virtues; all the teachers of your philosophy are dumb to it. For example; I meet a merchantman loaded with goods—for what is the cargo meant? To purchase slaves; to tear fathers from their families—husbands from their wives; to burn villages; and bribe savages to murder each other.—I strip the hold: the slave-market is at an end: and no one suffers, but a fellow, who ought to have been hanged long ago."

The captain's doctrine was more popular than ever.

"I meet a rich old rogue," continued he, "on his voyage between the islands. What is he going to do? To marry some pretty creature, who has a young lover, perhaps a dozen. The marriage would break her heart; and raise

a little rebellion in the island.—We capture the old Cupid, strip him of his coin, and he is a Cupid no more: fathers and mothers abhor him at once; the young lover has his bride; and the old one his lesson. The one gets his love, and the other his experience; and both have to thank the gallant crew of the Scorpion; which Heaven long keep above water."

A joyous huzza, and the waving of caps and swords, hailed the captain's display. "The Free-trade for ever" was shouted in all directions.

"I see, comrades," said the captain, "that though truth is persuasive, your huzza is not for me, but for fact.—We find a young rake ranging the world with more money than brains, sowing sedition among the fair rivals for the honour of sharing his purse; running away with daughters; gambling greater fools than himself out of their fortunes; in short, playing the profligate in all shapes.—He drops into our hands; and we strip him to the last penny. What is the consequence? we make him virtuous on the spot. The profligate becomes a

model of penitence; the root of all his ills has been unearthed; the prodigal is saving; the bacchanal temperate; the seducer lives in the innocence of a babe; the gambler never touches a die. We have broken the main-spring of his vices—money; disarmed the soft deceiver of his spell—money; checked the infection of the gambler's example, by cutting off the source of the disease—money; or, if nothing can teach him common sense, our dungeon will at least keep him out of harm's way.

"And now my heroes of salt-water, noble brothers of the Nereids, sons of the star-light, here I make libation to our next merry meeting." He poured a part of his cup into the wave, and drank to the general health, with the remainder.

"Happiness to all; let our work to-night be what it will, I know, my lads, that it will be handsomely done. The enemy may call us names; but you will answer them by solid proofs, that, whatever we may be, we are neither slaves nor dastards. If I catch the insolent commander of the Roman fleet, I will teach him a lesson

in morals that he never knew before. He shall flog, fleece, and torture, no more. I will turn the hard-hearted tyrant into tenderness from top to toe. His treatment of the crew of the Hyæna was infamous; and by Jupiter, what I owe him shall be discharged in full. Now, on board, my heroes, and may Neptune take care of you."

The trumpets flourished; the people cheered; the boats pushed off; the galleys hoisted every sail; and in a moment we found ourselves rushing through the water, under the wildest canopy of heaven.

CHAPTER XVIII.

We stretched out far to sea, for the double purpose of falling by surprise upon the Roman squadron, and avoiding the shoals. The wind lulled at intervals so much, that we had recourse to our oars; it would then burst down with a violence, that all but hurled us out of the water. I now saw more of the captain, and was witness of the extraordinary energy, activity, and skill, of this singular young man. Never was there a more expert seaman. For every change of sea or wind, he had a new expedient; and when the hearts of the stoutest sank, he took the helm into his hands, and carried us through the chaos of water, foam,

whirlwind, and lightning, with the vigour and daring of one born to sport with the storm.

As I was gazing over the vessel's side, on the phosphoric gleams that danced along the ridges of the billows, he came up to me.

"I am sorry," said he, "that we have been compelled to give you so rough a specimen of our hospitality; and this is not altogether a summer sea; but you saw how the matter stood. The enemy would have been upon us; and the whole advantage of our staying at home would be, to have our throats cut in company."

Odd and rambling as his style was, there was something in his manner and voice that had struck me before, even in the boisterousness of the convivial crowd. But now, in the solitary ocean, there was a melancholy sweetness in his tones, that made me start with sad recollection. Yet, when by the lightning I attempted to discover in his features any clue to memory, and saw but the tall figure wrapped in the sailor's cloak, the hair streaming over his face in the spray, and every line of his powerful physiognomy at its full stretch in the

agitation of the time, the thought vanished again.

" I hinted," said he, after an interval of silence, " at your taking chance with us. If you will, you may. But the hint was thrown out merely to draw off the fellows about me; and you are at full liberty to forget it."

" It is impossible to join you," was my answer; " my life is due to my country."

" Oh! for that matter, so is mine; and due a long time ago: my only wonder is, how I have evaded payment till now. But I am a man of few words. I have taken a sort of liking to you, and should wish to have a few such at hand. The world calls me villain, and the majority of course carries the question. For its opinion, I do not care a cup of water: a bubble of this foam would weigh as heavy with me, as the rambling, giddy, vulgar judgment of a world, in which the first of talents is scoundrelism. I never knew a man fail, who brought to market prostitution of mind enough to make him a tool; vice enough to despise every thing but gain; and cunning enough to keep himself

out of the hands of the magistrate, till opulence enabled him to corrupt the law, or authority to defy it. But let this pass. The point between us is, will you take service?"

"No!—I feel the strongest gratitude for the manliness and generosity of your protection. You saved our lives; and our only hope of revisiting Judea in freedom is through you. But, young man, I have a great cause in hand. I have risked every thing for it. Family, wealth, rank, life, are my stake; and I look upon every hour given to other things as so far a fraud upon my country."

I heard him sigh. There was silence on both sides for a while, and he paced the deck; then suddenly returning, laid his hand on my shoulder. "I am convinced of your honour," said he, "and far be it from me to betray a man who has indeed a purpose worthy of manhood, into our broken and unhappy—aye, let the word come out, infamous career. But you tell me that I have been of some use to you; I now demand the return. You have refused

to take service with me.—Let me take service with you!"

I stared at him. He smiled sadly, and said, "You will not associate with one stained like me. Aye; for the robber there is no repentance. Yet why shall the world," and his voice was full of anguish, "why shall the ungenerous and misjudging world be suffered to expel and keep for ever at a distance those whom it has first betrayed?" His emotion got the better of him, and his voice sank. He again approached me. "I am weary of this kind of life. Not that I have reason to complain of the men about me; nor that I dislike the roaming and chances of the sea; but, that I feel the desire to be something better—to redeem myself out of the number of the dishonoured; to do something which, whether I live or die, will satisfy me that I was not meant to be—the outcast that I am."

"Then join us, if you will," said I. "Our cause demands the bold; and the noblest spirit that ever dwelt in man, would find its finest

field in the deliverance of our land of holiness and glory. But, can you leave all that you have round you here?"

"Not without a struggle. I have an infinite delight in this wild kind of existence. I love the strong excitement of hazard; I love the perpetual bustle of our career; I love even the capriciousness of wind and wave. I have wealth in return for its perils; and no man knows what enjoyment is, but he who knows it through the fatigue of a sailor's life. All the banquets of epicurism are not half so delicious, as even the simplest meal, to his hunger; nor the softest bed of luxury, half so refreshing as the bare deck to his weariness. But I must break up those habits; and, whether beggar and slave, or soldier and obtaining the distinction of a soldier's success, I am determined on trying my chance among mankind."

A sheet of lightning covered the whole horizon with blue flame; and a huge ball of fire springing from the cloud, after a long flight over the waters, split upon the shore.

The keenness of the sailor's eye saw what had escaped mine. "This was a lucky sea-light for us," said he. "The Romans are lying under yonder promontory; driven to take shelter by the gale, of course: — but for that fire-ball, they would have escaped me."

All hands were summoned upon deck; signals made to the other galleys; the little fleet brought into close order; pikes, torches, and combustibles of all kinds gathered upon the poop; the sails furled; and with muffled oars we glided down upon the enemy.

The Roman squadron, with that precaution which was the essential principle of their matchless discipline, were drawn up in order of battle, though they could have had no expectation of being attacked on such a night. But the roar of the wind buried every other sound, and we stole round the promontory unheard.

The short period of this silent navigation was one of the keenest anxiety. All but those necessary for the working of the vessel were

lying on their faces; we feared lest the very drawing of our breath might give the alarm; not a limb was moved, and, like a galley of the dead, we floated on, filled with destruction. We were yet at some distance from the twinkling lights that showed the prefect's trireme; when, on glancing round, I perceived a dark object on the water, and pointed it out to the captain. He looked, but looked in vain.

"Some lurking spy," said he, "that was born to pay for his knowledge." With a sailor's promptitude, he caught up a lamp, and swung it overboard. It fell beside the object, a small boat as black as the waves themselves.

"Now for the sentinel," were his words, as he plunged into the sea. The act was rapid as thought. I heard a struggle, a groan, and the boat floated empty beside me on the next billow.

But there was no time for search. We were within an oar's length of the anchorage. To communicate the loss of their captain, (and what could human struggle do among the mountain waves of that sea?) might be to dispirit the crew,

and ruin the enterprise. I took the command upon myself, and gave the word to fall on.

A storm of fire, as strange to the enemy as if it had risen from the bottom of the sea, was instantly poured on the advanced ships. The surprise was total. The crews, exhausted by the night, were chiefly asleep. The troops on board were helpless, on decks covered with the spray, and among shrouds and sails falling down in burning fragments on their heads. Our shouts gave them the idea of being attacked by overwhelming numbers; and, after a short dispute, we cleared the whole outer line of every sailor and soldier. The whole was soon a pile of flame, a sea volcano that lighted sky, sea, and shore.

Yet only half our work was done. The enemy were now fully awake, and no man could despise Roman preparation. I ordered a fire-galley to be run in between the leading ships; but she was caught half way by a chain, and turned round, scattering flame among ourselves. The boats were then lowered, and our most desperate fellows sent to cut out, or board.

But the crowded decks drove them back, and the Roman pike was an over-match for our short falchions. For a while we were forced to content ourselves with the distant exchange of lances and arrows. The affair became critical; the enemy were still three times our force; they were unmooring; and our only chance of destroying them was at anchor. I called the crew forward, and proposed that we should run the galley close on the prefect's ship, set them both on fire, and, in the confusion, carry the remaining vessels. But sailors, if as bold, are as capricious as their element. Our partial repulse had already disheartened them. I was met by murmurs and clamours for the captain. The clamours rose into open charges that I had, to get the command, thrown him overboard.

I was alone. Jubal, worn out with fatigue and illness, was lying at my feet, more requiring defence than able to afford it. The crowd were growing furious against the stranger. I felt that all depended on the moment, and leaped from the poop into the midst of the mutineers.

"Fools," I exclaimed, "what could I get by making away with your captain? I have no wish for your command. I have no want of your help. I disdain you:—bold as lions, over the table; tame as sheep, on the deck; I leave you to be butchered by the Romans. Let the brave follow me, if such there be among you."

A shallop that had returned with the defeated boarders lay by the galley's side. I seized a torch. Eight or ten, roused by my taunts, followed me into the boat. We pulled right for the Roman centre. Every man had a torch in one hand, and an oar in the other. We shot along the waters, a flying mass of flame; and while both fleets were gazing on us in astonishment, rushed under the poop of the commander's trireme. The fire soon rolled up her tarry sides, and ran along the cordage. But the defence was desperate, and lances rained upon us. Half of us were disabled in the first discharge; the shallop was battered with huge stones; and I felt that she was sinking.

"One trial more, brave comrades, one glorious attempt more! The boat must go

down; and unless we would go along with it, we must board."

I leaped forward, and clung to the chains. My example was followed. The boat went down; and this sight, which was just discoverable by the livid flame of the vessel, raised a roar of triumph among the enemy. But to climb up the tall sides of the trireme was beyond our skill, and we remained dashed by the heavy waves as she rose and fell. Our only alternatives now were to be piked, drowned, or burned. The flame was already rapidly advancing. Showers of sparkles fell upon our heads; the clamps and iron-work were growing hot to the touch; the smoke was rolling over us in suffocating volumes. I was giving up all for lost; when a mountainous billow swept the vessel's stern round, and I saw a blaze burst out from the shore. The Roman tents were on flame!

Consternation seized the crews thus attacked on all sides, and uncertain of the number of the assailants; they began to desert the ships, and, by boats or swimming, make for various

points of the land. The sight re-animated me. I climbed up the side of the trireme, torch in hand, and with my haggard countenance, made still wilder by the wild work of the night, looked a formidable apparition to men already harassed out of all courage. They plunged overboard, and I was monarch of the finest war galley on the coast of Syria.

But my kingdom was without subjects. None of my own crew had followed me. I saw the pirate vessels bearing down to complete the destruction of the fleet; and hailed them, but they all swept far wide of the trireme. The fire had taken too fast hold of her to make approach safe. I now began to feel my situation. The first triumph was past, and I found myself deserted. The deed of devastation was in the mean while rapidly going on. I saw the Roman ships successively boarded, almost without resistance, and in a blaze. The conflagration rose in sheets and spires to the heavens, and coloured the waters to an immeasurable extent with the deepest dye of gore.

I heard the victorious shouts, and mine rose

spontaneously along with them. In every vessel burned, in every torch flung, I rejoiced in a new blow to the tyrants of Judea. But my thoughts were soon fearfully brought home. The fire reached the cables; the trireme, plunging and tossing like a living creature in its last agony, burst away from her anchors: the wind was off the shore; a gust, strong as the blow of a battering-ram, struck her; and, on the back of a huge refluent wave, she shot out to sea, a flying pyramid of fire.

CHAPTER XIX.

NEVER was man more indifferent to the result than the solitary voyager of the burning trireme. What had life for me? I looked at pain with instinctive dread; but the waves offered a ready refuge from the more hideous suffering, and a single plunge in the whirling foam at my side would be the complete and instant cure of all the pangs that besiege the flesh. I gazed round me. The element of fire reigned supreme. The shore—mountain, vale, and sand—was bright as day, from the blaze of the tents, and floating fragments of the galleys. The heavens were an arch of angry splendour—every stooping cloud swept along,

reddened with the various dyes of the conflagration below. The sea was a rolling abyss of the fiercest colour of slaughter. The blazing vessels, loosened from the shore, rushed madly before the storm, sheet and shroud shaking loose abroad, like vast wings of flame.

At length all disappeared; the shore faded far into a dim line of light; the galleys sank or were consumed; the sea grew dark again; the lightnings were the only blaze of heaven. But the trireme, strongly built, and of immense size, still fed the flame, and still shot on through the tempest, that fell on her more furiously as she lost the cover of the land. The waves rose to a height that often baffled the wind, and left me floating in a strange calm between two black walls of water, reaching to the clouds, and on whose smooth sides the image of the burning vessel was reflected as strongly as in a mirror. But the ascent to the summit of those fearful barriers again let in the storm in its rage; the tops of the billows were whirled off in sheets of foam; the wind tore mast and sail away; and

the vessel was dashed forward like a stone discharged from an engine. I stood on the poop, which the spray and the wind kept clear of flame, and contemplated, with some feeling of the fierce grandeur of the spectacle, the fire rolling over the forward part of the vessel in a thousand shapes and folds.

While I was thus careering along, like the genius of fire upon his throne, I caught a glimpse of sails scattering in every direction before me—I had rushed into the middle of one of those small trading fleets that coasted annually between the Euxine and the Nile. They flew as if pursued by a fiend. But the same wind that bore them, bore me; and their screams, as the trireme bounded from billow to billow on their track, were audible even through the roarings of the storm.

They gradually succeeded in spreading themselves so far, that the contact with the flame must be partial. But, on one, the largest and most crowded, the trireme bore inevitably down. The hunted ship tried every mode of escape in

vain; it manoeuvred with extraordinary skill: but the pursuer, lightened of every burthen, rushed on like a messenger of vengeance.

I could distinctly see the confusion and misery of the crowd that covered the deck; men and women kneeling, weeping, dying; or, in the fierce riot of despair, struggling for some wretched spoil, or equally wretched indulgence, that a few moments more must tear from all alike. But among the fearful mingling of sounds, one voice I heard that struck to my soul. It alone roused me from my stern scorn of human suffering. I no longer looked upon those beings as upon insects that must be crushed in the revolution of the great wheel of fate. The heart, the living human heart, palpitated within me. I rushed to the side of the trireme, and with voice and hand made signals to the crew to take me on board.

But at my call a cry of agony echoed through the vessel. All fled to its further part, but a few, who, unable to move, were seen dropt on their knees, and in the attitudes of preternatural fear, imploring every power of heaven. Shocked

by the consciousness that, even in the hour when mutual hazard softens the heart of man, I was an object of horror, I shrank back. I heard the voice once more; and once more resolved to make an effort for life; flung a burning fragment over the side, to help me through the waves.

But the time was past. The fragment had scarcely touched the foam, when a sheet of lightning wrapped sea and sky; the flying vessel was gone. My eye looked but upon the wilderness of waters. The flash was fatal to both. It had struck the hold of the trireme, in which was stowed a large freightage of the bitumen and nitre of the desert. A column of flame, white as silver, rose straight and steadily up to the clouds; and the huge ship, disparting timber by timber, reeled, heaved, and plunged headlong into the bosom of the ocean.

I rose to the surface from a prodigious depth. I was nearly breathless. My limbs were wasted with famine and fatigue; but the tossing of the surges sustained and swept me on. The

chill at last benumbed me, and my limbs were heavy as iron ; when a broken mast rolling by, entangled me in its cordage. It drove towards a point of land round which the current swept. Strongly netted in the wreck, I was dragged along, sometimes above the water, sometimes below. But a violent shock released me, and with a new terror of the death that I had so long resisted, I felt myself go down. I was ingulfed in the whirlpool !

Every sensation was horridly vivid. I had the full consciousness of life, and of the unfathomable depth into which I was descending. I heard the roar and rushing of the waters round me ; the holding of my breath was torture ; I strained, struggled, tossed out my arms, grasped madly around, as if to catch something that might retard my hideous descent. My eyes were open. I never was less stunned by shock or fear. The solid darkness, the suffocation, the furious whirl of the eddy that spun me round its huge circle like an atom of sand, every sense of drowning, passed through my

shattered frame with an individual and successive pang.

I at last touched something, whether living or dead, fish or stone, I know not; but the impulse changed my direction, and I was darted up to the surface.

The storm had gone with the rapidity of the south. The stars burned brightly blue above my head. The pleasant breath of groves and flowery perfumes came on the waters. A distant sound of sweet voices lingered on the air. Like one roused from a frightful dream, I could scarcely believe that this was reality. But the rolling waters behind gave me sudden evidence. A billow, the last messenger of the storm, burst into the little bay, filled it to the brim with foam, and tossed me far forward. It rolled back, dragging with it the sedge and pebbles of the beach, with an enormous noise. I grasped the trunk of an olive, rough and firm as the rock itself. The retiring wave left me; I felt my way some paces among the trees; cast myself down, and, worn out with fatigue,

had scarcely touched the earth, when I fell into that profound sleep which is the twin brother of death.

I awoke in the decline of the day, as I could perceive by the yellow and orange hues that coloured the thick branches above me. I was lying in a delicious recess, crowded with fruit-trees; my bed was the turf, but it was soft as down; a solitary nightingale above my head was sending forth snatches of that melody, which night prolongs into the very voice of sweetness and sorrow; and a balmy air from the wild thyme and blossoms of the rose breathed soothingly even to the mind.

I had been thrown on one of the little isles that lie off Anthædon, a portion of the Philistine territory, before it was won by our hero Maccabæus. The commerce which once filled the arm of the sea near Gaza, perished in the change of masters, and silence and seclusion reigned in a spot formerly echoing with the tumult of merchant and mariner. The little isle, the favourite retreat of the opulent Greek and Syrian traders in the overpowering heats of

summer, and cultivated with the lavish expenditure of commercial taste, now gave no proof of its ever having felt the foot of man, but in the spontaneous pouring out of flowers, once brought from every region of the East and West, and the exquisite fruits that still enriched its slopes and dells.

In all things else, nature had resumed her rights; the pavilions, the temples of Parian and Numidian stone, were in ruins, and buried under a carpet of roses and myrtles. The statues left but here and there a remnant of themselves, a sublime relic wreathed over in fantastic spirals by the clematis and other climbing plants. The sculptured fountain let its waters loose over the ground; and the guardian genius that hung in marble beauty over the spring, had long since resigned his charge, and lay mutilated and discoloured with the air and the dew. But the spring still gushed, bounding bright between the gray fissures of the cliff, and marking its course through the plain by the richer mazes of green.

To me, who was as weary of existence as

ever was galley-slave, this spot of quiet loveliness had a tenfold power. My mind, like my body, longed for rest.

Through life I had walked in a thorny path. I had winged a tempestuous atmosphere. Useless hazards, wild projects, bitter sufferings, were my portion. My affections, those feelings in which alone I could be said to live, had been made inlets of pain. The love which nature and justice won from me to my family, was perpetually thwarted by a chain of circumstances that made me a wretched, helpless, and solitary man. What then could I do better than abandon the idle hope of finding happiness among mankind, break off the trial which must be prolonged only to my evil, and elude the fate that destined me to be an exile in the world! Yes! I would no longer be a man of suffering in the presence of its happiness ; a wretch stripped of an actual purpose or a solid hope in the midst of its activity and triumph ; the abhorred example of a career miserable with defeated pursuit, and tantalized with expectations, vain as the bubble on the stream!

In this stern resolve, gathering a courage from despair,—as the criminal standing on the scaffold scoffs at the world that rejects him,—I determined to exclude recollection. The spot round me was to fill up the whole measure of my thoughts. Wife, children, friend, country, to me must exist no more. I imaged them in the tomb; I talked with them as shadows, as the graceful and lovely existences of ages past; but laboured to divest them of the individual features that cling to the soul.

Lest this mystic repose should be disturbed by any of the sights of living man, I withdrew deeper into the shades which first sheltered me. It was enough for me that there was a canopy of leaves above to shield my limbs from the casual visitations of a sky, whose sapphire looked scarcely capable of a stain, and that the turf was soft for my couch. Fruits, sufficient to tempt the most luxurious taste, were falling round, and the waters of the bright rivulet scooped in the rind of citron and orange, were a draught that the epicure might envy. I was utterly ignorant on what shore of the Mediterra-

nean I was thrown, further than that the sun rose behind my bower, and threw his western lustre on the waveless expanse of sea that spread before it to the round horizon.

CHAPTER XX.

But no man can be a philosopher against nature. With my strength, the desire of exertion returned. My most voluptuous rest became irksome. Memory would not be restrained; the floodgates of thought opened once more; and to resist the passion for the world, I was driven to the drudgery of the hands. I gathered wood for the winter's fuel, in the midst of days when the sun poured fire from the heavens; I attempted to build a hut, beside grottos that a hermit would love; I trained trees, and cultivated flowers, where the soil threw out all that was rich in both with exhaustless prodigality.

But no expedient would appease the passion for the absorbing business of the world. My bower lost its enchantment; the delight of lying on beds of violet, and, with my eyes fixed on the heavens, wandering away on the wings of fantastic illusion, palled upon me; the colours of the vision grew dim: I no more imaged shapes of beauty winging their way through the celestial azure; I heard no harmonies of spirits on the midnight winds; I followed no longer the sun, rushing on his golden chariot-wheels to lands unstained by human step; or plunged with him into the depths, and ranged the secret wonders of ocean.

Labour, in its turn, grew irksome. I reproached myself for the vulgar existence, which occupied only the inferior portion of my nature; living only for food, sleep, and shelter, what was I better than the seals that basked on the shore at my feet? Night too,—that mysterious rest, interposed for purposes of such varied beneficence—to cool the brain fevered by the bustle of the day—to soften mutual hostility by a pause, to which all alike must yield—to re-

mind our forgetful nature, by a perpetual semblance, of the time when all things must pass away, and be silent, and change—to sit in judgment on our hearts, and, by a decision which no hypocrisy can disguise, anticipate the punishment of the villain, as it gives the man of virtue the foretaste of his reward,—night began to exert its old influence over me; and, with the strongest determination to think no more of what had been, I closed my eyes but to let in the past. I might have said, that my true sleep was during the labours of the day; and my waking, when I lay with my senses sealed, upon my bed of leaves.

It is impossible to shut up the mind; and I at last abandoned the struggle. The spell of indolence once broken, I became as restless as an eagle in a cage. My first object was to discover on what corner of the land I was thrown. Nothing could be briefer than the circuit of my island, and nothing less explanatory. It was one of those little alluvial spots that grow round the first rock that catches the vegetation swept down by rivers. Ages had

gone by, while reed was bound to reed, and one bed of clay laid upon another. The ocean had thrown up its pebbles on the shore, the wind had sown tree and herb on the naked sides of the tall rock, the tree had drawn the cloud, and from its roots let loose the spring. Cities and empires perished while this little island was forming into loveliness. Thus nature perpetually builds, while decay does its work with the pomps of man.

From the shore I saw but a long line of yellow sand across a broad belt of blue waters. No sight on earth could less attract the eye, or be less indicative of man and the delights of civilised life.

Yet, within that sandy barrier, what wild and wondrous acts were doing and to be done! My mind, with a wing that no sorrow or bondage could tame, passed over the desert, and saw the battle, the siege, the bloody sedition, the long and heart-broken banishment, the fierce conflict of passions irrestrainable as the tempest, the melancholy ruin of my country by a

judgment powerful as fate, and dreary and returnless as the grave.

But the waters between me and that shore, were an obstacle that no vigour of imagination could overcome. I was too feeble to attempt the passage by swimming. The opposite coast appeared to be uninhabited, and the few fishing-boats that passed lazily along this lifeless coast, evidently shunned the island, as I conceived, from some hidden shoal. I felt myself a prisoner, and the thought irritated me. That ancient disturbance of my mind, which rendered it so keenly excitable, was born again; I felt its coming, and knew that my only resource was to escape from this circumscribing paradise, that was become my dungeon. Day after day I paced the shore, awaking the echoes with my useless shouts, as each distant sail glided along close to the sandy line that was to me the unattainable path of happiness. I made signals from the hill; but I might as well have summoned the vultures to stop, as they flew screaming above my head to feed on the relics of the Syrian caravans.

What trifles can sometimes stand between man and enjoyment! Wisdom would have thanked Heaven for the hope of escaping the miseries of life in the little enchanted round, guarded by that entrenchment of waters, filled with every production that could delight the sense, and giving to the spirit weary of all that the world could offer, the gentle retirement in which it could gather its remaining strength, and make its peace with Heaven.

I was lying, during a fiery noon, on the edge of the island, looking towards the opposite coast, the only object on which I could now bear to look; when in the stillness of the hour I heard a strange mingling of distant sounds; yet so totally indistinct, that after long listening I could conjecture it to be nothing but the ripple of the water.

It died away. But it haunted me; I heard it in fancy. It followed me in the twilight, when earth and heaven were soft and silent as an infant's sleep—when the very spirit of tranquillity seemed to be folding his dewy wings over the world.

Wearied more with thought than with the daily toil that I imposed on myself for its cure, I had lain down on my bed of turf under the shelter of those thick woven boughs that scarcely let in the glimpses of the moon. The memory of all whom later chances brought in my path, passed before me. The fate of my gallant kinsmen in Masada; of the wily Ishmaelite; of the pirate captain; of that unhappy crew, whose danger was my involuntary deed; of my family, scattered upon the face of the world. Arcturus bending towards the horizon, told me that it was midnight; when my reverie was broken by the same sounds that had disturbed my day.

But they now came full and distinct. I heard the crashing of heavy axles along the road, the measured tramp of cavalry, the calls of the clarion and trumpet. They seemed beside me. I started from my bed; but all around was still. I gazed across the waters. They were lying, like another sky, reflecting star for star with the blue immensity above; but on them was no living thing.

I had heard of phantom armies traversing

the air; but the sky was serene as crystal. I climbed the hill; upon whose summit I recollected to have seen the ruins of an altar; gathered the weeds, and lighted a beacon. The flame threw a wide and ruddy reflection on the waters and the sky. I watched by it till morn. But the sound had died as rapidly as it came. And when with the first pearly tinge of the east the coast shaped itself beneath my eye, I saw with bitter disappointment but the same solitary sand.

The idea of another day of suspense was intolerable. I returned to my place of refuge, gave it that glance of mingled feeling, without which perhaps no man leaves the shelter which he is never to see again; collected a few fruits for my sustenance if I should reach the shore of Palestine, and, with a resolution to perish, if it so pleased Providence, but not to return, plunged into the sea.

The channel was even broader than I had calculated by the eye. My limbs were still enfeebled; but my determination was strength. I was swept by the current far from the oppo-

site curve of the shore, yet its force spared mine; and at length I felt the ground under my feet. I was overjoyed; though never was scene less fitted for joy. To the utmost verge of the view, spread the desert; a sullen herbless waste, glowing like a sheet of brass in the almost vertical sun.

But I was on land. I had accomplished my purpose. Hope, the power of exertion, the chances of the glorious future were before me. I was no longer a prisoner within the borders of a spot, which for the objects of manly life might as well have been my grave.

I journeyed on in the direction of Masada; there at least I should be no fugitive. Yet, what fearful reverses, in this time of confusion, might not have occurred even there? what certainty could I have of being spared the bitterest losses, when sorrow and slaughter reigned through the land? Was I to be protected from the storm that fell with such promiscuous fury upon all? I too, the marked, the victim, the example to mankind!—I looked wistfully back to the isle, that isle of oblivion!

While I was pacing the shore, that actually scorched my feet, I heard a cry of alarm, and saw on a low range of sand-hills, at some distance, a figure making violent gestures. Friend or enemy, at least here was man; and I did not deeply care for the consequences even of meeting man in his worst shape. My life was not worth the taking. Hunger and thirst might be more formidable enemies in the end; and I advanced towards the half-naked savage, who, however, ran down from the hill, crying out louder than ever. I dragged my weary limbs after him, and reached the edge of a little dell, in which stood a circle of tents.

I had fallen among the robbers of the desert; but there was evident confusion in this fragment of a tribe. The camels were in the act of being loaded, men and women were gathering their household utensils with the haste of terror, and dogs, sheep, camels, and children, set up their voices in a general clamour.

Dreading that I might lose my only chance of refreshment and guidance, I cried out with all my might, and ran down towards them; but the

sight of me raised an universal scream; and every living thing took flight, the warriors of the colony gallantly leading the way with a speed that soon left the pedestrians far in the rear. But their invader conquered only for food. I entered the first of the deserted tents, and indulged myself with a full feast of bread, dry and rough as the sand on which it was baked, and of water only less bitter than that through which I had swum. But all luxury is relative. To me they were both delicious, and I thanked at once the good fortune which had provided so prodigally for those withered monarchs of the sands, and had invested me with the salutary terror that gave the fruits of triumph without the toil.

At the close of my feast I uttered a few customary words of thanksgiving; a cry of joy rang in my ears; I looked round; saw, to my surprise, a bale of carpets walk forward from a corner of the tent, and heard a Jewish tongue, imploring for life and freedom. I rapidly developed the speaker; and from this repulsive coverture came forth one of the loveliest young

females that I had ever seen. Her story was soon told. She was the grand-daughter of Ananus, the late high-priest, one of the most distinguished of his nation for every lofty quality; but he had fallen on evil days. His resistance to faction sharpened the dagger against him, and he perished in one of the merciless feuds of the city. His only descendant was sent to claim the protection of her relatives in the south of Judea. But her escort was dispersed by an attack of the Arabs, and in the division of the spoil, the Sheik of this little encampment obtained her as his share.

The robber-merchant was on his way to Cesarea to sell his prize to the Roman governor, when my arrival put his army to the rout. To my inquiry into the cause of this singular success, the fair girl answered, that the Arabs had taken me for a supernatural visitant, "probably come to claim some account of their proceedings in the late expedition." They had been first startled by the blaze in the island, which, from a wild tradition, was supposed to be the dwelling of forbidden beings. The passage of

the channel was seen, and increased the wonder; my daring to appear alone among men whom mankind shunned, completed the belief of my more than mortal prowess; and the Arabs' courage abandoned a contest, in which "the least that could happen to them was to be swept into the ocean, or tost piecemeal upon the winds."

To prevent the effects of their returning intrepidity, no time was to be lost in our escape. But the sun, which would have scorched anything but a lizard, or a Bedoween, to death, kept us prisoners until evening. We were actively employed in the mean while. The plunder of the horde was examined with the curiosity that makes one of the indefeasible qualities of the fair in all climates; and the young Jewess had not been an inmate of the tent, nor possessed the brightest eyes among the daughters of women, for nothing.

With an air between play and revenge, she hunted out every recess in which even the art of Arab thievery could dispose of its produce; and at length rooted up from a hole in the very

darkest corner of the tent, that precious deposit for which the Sheik would have sacrificed all mankind, and even the last hair of his beard—a bag of shekels. She danced with exultation, as she poured its shining contents on the ground before me.

"If ever Arab regretted his capture," said she, "this most unlucky of Sheiks shall have cause. But I shall teach him at least one virtue; repentance to the last hour of his life. I think that I see him at this moment frightened into a philosopher, and wishing from the bottom of his soul, that he had, for once, resisted the temptations of his trade."

"But what will you do with the money, my pretty teacher of virtue to Arabs?"

"Give it to my preserver," said she, advancing, with a look suddenly changed from sportiveness to blushing timidity; "give it to him, who was sent by Providence to rescue a daughter of Israel from the hands of Pagans."

In the emotion of gratitude to me there was mingled a loftier feeling, never so lovely as in youth and woman; she threw up a single glance

to heaven, and a tear of piety and gratitude filled her sparkling eye.

"But, temptress and teacher at once, by what right am I to seize on the Sheik's treasury? May it not diminish my supernatural dignity with the tribe, to be known as a plunderer?"

"Ha!" said she, with a rosy smile; "who is to betray you but your accomplice? Besides, money is reputation and innocence, wisdom and virtue, all over the world. Be rich, and mankind are too rational to inquire how you became the happy possessor of that which mankind worship in their soul. But listen, and let us state the case fairly."

Touching with the tip of one slender finger my arm as it lay folded over my bosom, she waved the other hand in attitudes of untaught persuasion.

"Is it not true," pleaded the pretty creature, "that next to a crime of our own, is the being a party to the crime of others? Now, for what conceivable purpose could the Arab have collected this money? Not for food or clothing;

for he can eat thistles with his own mule, and nature has furnished him with clothing as she has furnished the bear. The alhaick is only an encumbrance to his impenetrable skin. What then can he do with money, but mischief? fit out new expeditions, and capture other fair maidens, who cannot hope to find spirits good or bad for their protectors? If we leave him the means of evil, what is it but doing the evil ourselves? So," concluded this resistless pleader, carefully gathering up the spoil, and putting it into my hand, "I have gained my cause, and have now only to thank my most impartial judge for his patient hearing."

There is a spell in woman. No man, not utterly degraded, can listen without delight to the accents of the guileless heart. Beauty too has a natural power over the mind; and it is right that this should be. All that overcomes selfishness, the besetting sin of the world, is an instrument of good. Beauty is but melody of a higher kind; and both alike soften the troubled and hard nature of man. Even if we looked on lovely woman but as on a rose, an

exquisite production of the summer hours of life, it would be idle to deny her influence in making even those summer hours sweeter.

But, as the companion of the mind, as the very model of a friendship that no chance can shake, as the pleasant sharer of the heart of heart, the being to whom man returns after the tumult of the day, like the worshipper to a secret shrine, to revive his nobler tastes and virtues at a source pure from the evil of the external world, and glowing with a perpetual light of sanctity and love; where shall we find her equal! or what must be our feeling towards the mighty Disposer of earth and all that it inhabit, but of admiration and gratitude to that disposal, which thus combines our highest happiness with our purest virtue!

END OF VOL. II.

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